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THE LIFE
OF A SOUTH AFRICAN TRIBE

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The Life of a South African Tribe

BY

HENRI A. JUNOD

OF THE

Swiss Romande Mission

I. THE SOCIAL LIFE

NEUCHATEL (SWITZERLAND)

IMPRIMERIE ATTINGER FRÈRES

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INTRODUCTION

His Excellency The Right Honourable James Bryce, O. M.
His Britannic Majesty's Ambassador and Plenipotentiary,
Washington.

Dear Sir,

Fifteen years ago I had the great pleasure of receiving your visit in Lourenço Marques where I was staying as the head of the Swiss Romande Mission. You had been travelling all through South Africa and, though momentous political problems were before your mind at that time, bearing on the relations between the white races of that Sub-Continent, you had devoted considerable attention to the native tribes all over the land and tried to understand what they were and what their future would be. But you had quickly noticed how scant is our knowledge about them and you were trying to stimulate men on the spot to undertake a scientific study of their primitive life. In the course of our conversation, I was struck by the following remark which you made to me : " How thankful would we be, we, men of the XIXth century, if a Roman had taken the trouble to fully investigate the habits of our Celtic forefathers ! This work has not been done and we shall always remain ignorant of things which would have interested us so much ! "

This observation was quite a revelation to me. It is possible then, that these natives for whom we went to Africa would themselves benefit also by such a study and that, in the course of time, they would be grateful to know what they were when they were still leading their savage life... This argument added to so many others had never occured to me. Up to that date I had already collected some Ronga tales and studied some curious customs of the tribe. But the science

which I was cultivating as a favourite pastime was Entomology. Delagoa Bay is a splendid place for beetles and butterflies. I had come across a wonderful forest near Morakwen where I had been fortunate enough to discover a new kind of Papilio ! Since that time Ethnography more or less supplanted Entomology. I started on that systematic and thorough investigation which you commended to me and I very soon found out that, after all, Man is infinitely more interesting than the insect ! The material which I gathered amongst the Ba-Ronga of Delagoa Bay was first published in my French book "Les Ba-Ronga" with the kind help of the Geographical Society of Neuchâtel in 1898. Since then I pursued my study amongst the Northern Clans of the Thonga of the Transvaal and, if I am able to undertake this publication in which I hope to give a more complete description of the life of a South African tribe, I feel that I owe to you the generating idea, the decisive impetus

That is the reason why I am glad to dedicate to you the present work.

* * *

This was the proper time to undertake it, as the following recent and sad experience will plainly show. Coming home in 1909, I met, on board the splendid U. C. Steamer on which we were travelling, three well known native gentlemen who were, I think, going to England for political reasons. I had great pleasure in speaking with them. One of them was the editor of a native paper ; another was a Christian chief, the third one was at the head of a Training Institution which he founded himself. One day I made up my mind to gather some ethnographical facts from them. They were Zulus and I wanted to know for purposes of comparison what were the precise ideas of their tribe about witchcraft. Never in my scientific carreer did I meet with more complete failure ! The editor had been born in a Wesleyan family and never stayed amongst heathen. The chief knew much more on the subject but, for some obscure reason, he was not inclined to disclose his knowledge ; the Principal of the Institution was a very clever man ; he first declared that witchcraft was met with amongst white people just the same as amongst South African natives ; that it was only a form of mesmerism and, as he was always anxious to get more knowledge himself, he proceeded to question me about mesmerism ; the whole interview ended therefore in a lesson which I was obliged

to give to him on that mysterious subject and I did not learn anything new from my three friends... I left them in quite a melancholy mood, thinking how different it was with my Thonga informants, Mboza, Tobane and even Elias !

In fact, the circumstances in which I found myself amongst the Thonga, have been as favourable as they can be for such an investigation. The great bulk of the tribe is still absolutely savage. We have mastered its language and can understand all they tell us. On the other hand we have founded a Church amongst them and have intimate relations with some of them. The adults in our congregations have been heathen themselves and have practised the rites on which I questioned them. They can describe them better than raw heathens as they now stand at a certain distance from their old life and can judge of it more independently. They possess what our French historians call *le recul nécessaire*. Enjoying their full confidence, having learned by long practise how to put questions in order to get impartial answers, I think that their testimony can be considered as scientifically reliable. Of course errors are always possible. But science proceeds by successive approximations. I dare say the present monograph of the Thonga tribe compared with my book " *Les Ba-Ronga* " will be a nearer approach to the truth and it is quite possible that later on a more perfect account will be given by somebody who will have had more time to spare and more insight than myself into this delicate work.

* * *

When a historian publishes a monograph, he first gives the list of his sources of information. He vindicates the truth of his results by showing that they are based on trustworthy documents. My documents are not books. They are living witnesses and I beg to introduce some of them to my readers as they have been my faithful collaborators and I owe to them most of my knowledge.

The first man whom I questioned systematically was a Ronga of Nondwane (North of Lourenço Marques) named *Spoon*. He had been my butterfly catcher and I had often admired his skill and his powers of observation. He became my instructor in the art of bone throwing. He had been more or less a diviner, using his dice when going to hunt ; but after the war of the natives against the Portuguese (1894-1895) he lost confidence in his divinatory bones as well as in

his gods and became a Christian. He always had and still possesses a great deal of imagination. I was often obliged to control his explanations. Spoon certainly has the mythological sense more developed than any of my other informants ; however he is through and through a Bantu and whatever he says is always picturesque and striking. After him, I undertook to gather all the knowledge possessed by *Tobane*. Tobane was a splendid man when I knew him in Lourenço Marques, in the years 1895 and 1896. Tall, of a remarkable light complexion, his eyes very clear and bright, he was a man of mark in the Mpfumo clan. From his youth he had been in relation with the leading families of the tribe, being himself the son of Magugu, the native general who brought to an end the long war of succession of the Shangaan in 1856-1862. He had been mixed up in all the political affairs of the country for a long time and had a profound knowledge of the customs of the court and of the tribunal amongst his people. He was a patriot and when he became a Christian he did his best to bring his brethren to his new faith. When he understood what I wanted, he at once did his best to satisfy me and sometimes he even anticipated my questions : " *Tjika, ndi ku byela*... Keep quiet, I am going to tell you ", said he eagerly ! I owe to him most of what I know about the tribal system of the Ronga. (See Les Ba-Ronga, page 11).

Phot. P. Berthoud

SPOON

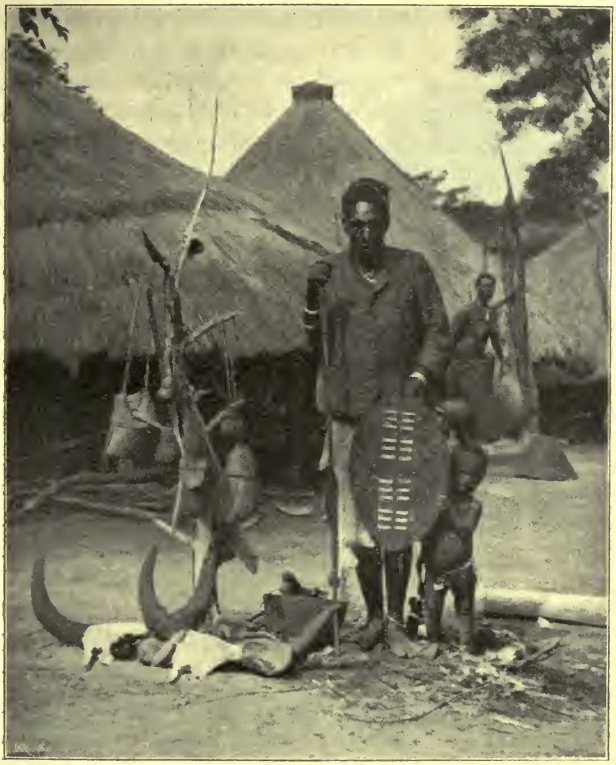
as bone-thrower in 1894.

Phot. P. Berthoud

TOBANE

Having then been called by the development of the Mission to leave Lourenço Marques to

start a training school amongst the Thonga of the Transvaal, I met in Shiluvane near Leydsdorp with a man who was for the Northern clans of the tribe an authority as excellent as Tobane for the Southern Ronga clans. His name was *Mankhelu*. He was an elder son of Shiluvane, the late chief of the Nkuna clan



Phot. H.-A. Junod

MANKHELU

standing in his village by the magic forked pole.

and had been for many years the prince-regent of the Ba-Nkuna, till the actual chief Muhlaba came of age. Mankhelu was the General of the army, the great doctor of the royal kraal, one of the main councillors, an entirely convinced bone-thrower, a priest for his family, a Bantu so deeply steeped in the obscure conceptions of a Bantu mind that he never could get rid of them and remained a hea-

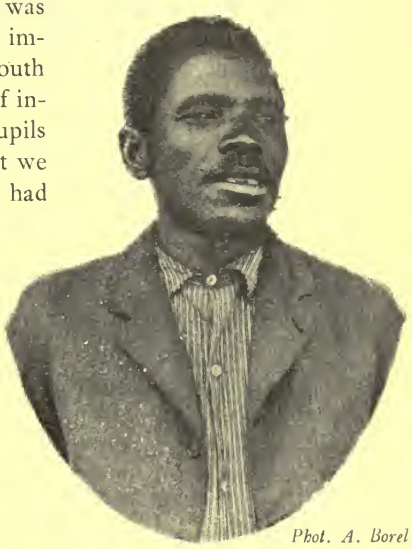
then till his death in 1908. Very kind hearted, very devoted to the missionaries, he was a true friend for me and willingly disclosed to me the secrets of his medical and divinatory science. I owe to him an account of his bone-throwing system which was much more elaborate than the one Spoon had given me in Rikatla though the two agree on the main points. Mankhelu had many dealings with the Suto or Pedi clans of the N. E. Transvaal. He was a celebrated rain-maker and had the more credit amongst them as he was a foreigner. I have been on my guard carefully to differentiate what is of a Suto origin and what is purely Thonga in the information he gave me.

In my congregation at the station of Shiluvane was an old convert baptised, odd to relate, by the name of a professor of divinity of Lausanne, *Viguet*. He was a clever man but not always a very good Christian, I must confess. He possessed a splendid memory. Having been headman in a village of Thonga refugees in the Spelonken, he gave me valuable information regarding the mysteries of family life as well as about the initiation ceremonies. His home was Tsungu on the Limpopo but he had moved to the Transvaal during the succession war of 1862. He was certainly a first rate informant, possessing a clear head, always using the technical expressions and illustrating his points with great skill. He and Mankhelu have taught me most of what I know about the Northern clans. I learned however many other facts also from *Mawewe*, the poet-laureate of the Nkuna court and from *Simeon Gana*, one of my pupils who belonged to an old and important family, and also from others.

In 1907 I came back to the coast to start in Rikatla (18 miles North of Lourenço Marques) a Training Institution for our work in Portuguese Territory. There I again found my old friend Spoon who had been baptised Elias and was one of the elders of the little Church; he had grown old but was always of the same merry character and disposed to communicate anything he knew. Another man was his co-elder there, a Ronga of the Mazwaya family called *Mboza*. I found him to be a very intelligent man, quite an authority on the rites of the clan. He had been "possessed" and had gone through all the initiation ceremonies of the Ngoni possession, having become an exorciser himself. So he was able to give me new information on this mysterious subject. I undertook a systematic investigation with these two men in 1909 taking as a guide the set of questions prepared by Prof. J. Frazer for people collecting ethnographical material and giving special attention to the question of the taboo. During this

study which took me many months I was more than ever impressed with the immense complexity of the Life of a South African tribe ! Quoting my sources of information I must also mention the pupils of my school. Every Tuesday night we had a meeting in which one of them had to relate a story, to describe a custom, to tell a native tale... His companions then added what they knew and, as some of them were grown up men, these debates were often very instructive.

I was able to collect in all more than one hundred tales ; most of them have been published in my *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga* and in the book on *Les Ba-Ronga*. I have still a good many in manuscript, some of which I intend publishing in the second volume of the present work.



Phot. A. Borel

SPOON-ELIAS

as Church elder in 1907.

* * *

My aim, in collecting all this material has been twofold, scientific and practical.

First of all scientific. The Life of a South African tribe is a collection of biological phenomena which must be described objectively and which are of great interest, representing, as they do, a certain stage of human development. These biological phenomena are sometimes at first of a repulsive character. The sexual life of the Bantu especially shocks our moral feelings. I did not think however that I could entirely leave out this subject in a scientific book and the more I studied it, the more I saw that these strange rites have a much deeper meaning than at first appears and that we could not pretend to know natives if we remain ignorant of these facts. But while trying to give a full account, I am convinced, on the other hand, that, to be truly scientific, such a description must be limited to one well defined tribe. I go even further : all the data must be localised ; in

the tribe itself there are different clans; customs vary from one to another. It is of the greatest importance that all the facts be classed geographically. A similar work can be done later for other tribes and it is only when a sufficient number of trustworthy monographs have been written that a comparative study on Bantu ethnography can be undertaken. The "Essential Kafir" of Dudley Kidd is very interesting and full of useful remarks, but the Essential Kafir will not be known till a scientific and thorough study of all the tribes has been completed. My aim has been to submit the Thonga tribe to such a study and I shall be most gratified if it leads other observers to undertake the same investigation with regard to other African tribes.

Though I do not pretend to prejudge anything about any other South African tribe, it will soon be seen that many of the customs here described are spread more or less over the whole of the Sub-Continent and that what I write about the Thonga applies more or less to the Suto, the Zulu, even to the Nyandja of Lake Nyassa and to tribes in Central Africa. I think therefore that the conclusions reached by this study may be of use not only to those interested in the Thonga tribe itself but to all Africanists or Bantuists.

*
* *

There are two classes of men to whom I should like to bring some practical help in their work : the Native Commissioners and the Missionaries.

It is absolutely necessary that Native Commissioners should have a better knowledge of the tribe to which they administer in the name of civilised Governments. They are apt to make the most dangerous mistakes from mere ignorance of the true nature of rites or superstitions which they do not understand. I have heard of colonial authorities receiving witchraft accusations, believing that the pretended wizards were real murderers and anthropophagists and condemning them as such ! To govern savages, you must study them thoroughly in order both to recognise the wrong conceptions against which you have to contend and to avoid hurting their feelings unnecessarily. This is imperative if you wish to win their confidence and maintain a friendly understanding between them and and the alien European Government. How many native wars might have been avoided if the Native Commissioner had had a better knowledge of Bantu Ethno-

graphy, and, on the other hand, how much good has been done by those who have taken the trouble to study the Natives with sympathy in order to be just to them !

And this is equally true of Missionnaries.

Missionary work is much better understood now than is was formerly. The recent Edinburgh Conference has proclaimed the necessity for Missionaries of the sympathetic study of native beliefs and social customs. One of the eight Commissions which prepared that wonderful Congress devoted considerable time to this subject and issued a remarkable report whose conclusions are worth reading. It urges that on each field a thorough investigation be undertaken in order that the message of the Gospel may be presented in such a way as will appeal to those aspirations after the truth which reveal themselves in the religion and social rites of the Natives. How superior is this conception to that of former times when heathenism was considered a creation of the devil through and through. We see better now that, amidst darkness and sin, the heathen mind is often seeking light and righteousness and that these rays of truth, these presentiments of a higher life must be infinitely respected and utilised in the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For instance look how seriously the savage keep their taboo !.. This taboo — as we will see — is inspired by strange, unscientific physiological ideas regarding defilement and contagion which will disappear when scientific knowledge has spread amongst them. But let these ideas be somewhat amended, let the natives understand that what is taboo is not physical uncleanness but moral evil and their strong aversion to the act taboed may become a powerful moral impulse for good.

* * *

Here is the plan which I mean to adopt. After having briefly explained in a preliminary chapter what is the Thonga tribe, I will consider an individual and follow him in his career from birth to death; the story of the evolution of a man and of a woman will constitute the first part of the book.

Then I shall pass on to the first social organism formed by these individuals and study the life of the family and of the village, which is but an enlarged family.

The villages make up the clan and the tribe. The national life will

form my third part, where I will deal especially with the Chief, the Court, the Army.

The agricultural and industrial life and the literary and artistic life will then be studied (as collective manifestations of the life of the tribe) and last but not least. I will devote a considerable time to the religious life and superstitions, trying to know the soul of the tribe, to understand the manifold manifestations of its psychic life which have always had a special interest for me.

It would have been safer for me to write this new and enlarged edition of *Les Ba-Ronga* in French, my native tongue. I decided to attempt it in English, as the public interested in South African affairs is essentially an English speaking public and as a great portion of the Thonga tribe is settled in British Territory. I know that I can rely on the indulgence of the English public... When my readers notice that the book has been written by a foreigner — I am afraid they will often make that remark — I beg them kindly to remember that, for me, it would have been much more agreeable to write it in French...

Sir,

To know ! To observe new facts and to discover new laws, to impart knowledge to the world, to gather solid material for the wonderful palace which Science is building is a splendid aim for a man's life. You know yourself by experience that it is a great, a noble task to work for Science. You have written books which have become classical and have provided a most valuable contribution to Political Science. But afterwards you have consented to fill one of the most important and most difficult posts which your country could offer you and you have devoted your time and your scientific experience to maintaining a friendly and fruitful contact between the two great branches of the Anglo-Saxon family. In doing so you have taught us a lesson : To work for Science is noble ; but to help our fellow men is nobler still.

And now — *si parva licet componere magnis* — allow me this confession. In the difficult undertaking wich lies before me, I shall feel immensely gratified if scientists find useful material amongst my observations for their studies. Anthropologists try to throw some light on the dark problem of the origin of the psychic life in mankind. May the picture of a South African primitive tribe bring them some

valuable information. But I should feel even deeper satisfaction if my work could help my South African brethren and contribute to the peaceful solution of our great practical problem there, the native problem. White men soon tire of the native when they only see the badly educated youths who go about the streets of our colonial towns. They despise them, find them « cheeky » and very soon come to the conclusion: « Natives are no good! » Who can deny that this position taken up by so many South Africans is as dangerous for the peace of the country as are the very defects with which they reproach the natives and which often come from contact with a depraved and unscupulous civilisation? Let those who are prejudiced against the black race study more carefully its customs, its mind, such as it reveals itself in the old rites of the Bantu tribes. They will see that these natives are much more earnest than they thought and that in them beats a true human heart. If, in their ignorance of true morality and of true religion, they have submitted themselves willingly to the sufferings of initiation, to the painful rites of purification in order to reach what they thought to be a higher level of human righteousness, are we not entitled to hope that we shall be able to build in them a character, when we place them under the moralising influence of Christianity and teach them to understand the religion which has saved the world?

Should I succeed in eliciting new and more enlightened sympathy amongst the Whites for our native brethren, should this book prevent the gulf which separates the races from becoming wider, I think it will have been worth while writing it.

May I be allowed one final comment? Colossal changes are now taking place amongst the South African tribes. Civilisation has taken fast hold not only of the coast but of the interior. It has exercised a marvellous influence on the High Velt of Johannesburg and is spreading to the borders of the desert. Amongst those races so long stagnant, an evolution has started which is proceeding with great rapidity and a kind of fatality. What will be its ultimate result? The Ethnographer does not generally trouble himself with such questions. It is enough for him to note the facts carefully and to describe them accurately. I aim at being a faithful and impartial Ethnographer in the study of customs which still exist but will soon have passed away, but I cannot forget that I am also a Missionary. I belong to that body of men who, with Native Commissionners and liberal minded Colonists, feel they have a sacred duty to perform towards the weaker race. In this most tempting basket of varied fruits which civilisation offers

to the Native, we feel we must guide his inexperienced hand, pointing out to him those which conduce to his happiness and progress and those which are poisonous and might be fatal to him. This book is addressed to those who can influence this evolution, be they the Authorities puzzled by the native problem, or be they educated natives who are perplexed regarding the future of their race. I will endeavour to indicate the line along which it appears to me we ought to direct the tribe in order to escape shame and destruction. But these suggestions will be given in special paragraphs, carefully separated form the scientific treatise. I have enough respect for science to avoid mixing the two subjects. On the other hand, I trust those of my readers who do not share my religious faith or my philanthropic hope will not blame me for here touching upon the important problems of native policy : Science has never opposed the betterment and ennoblement of humanity ! If this book can in the slightest degree help towards this end, such help will be its best and most precious justification.

Henri A. Junod.

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

THE THONGA TRIBE

I. *Geographical delimitation of the tribe.*

The Thonga tribe is composed of a group of Bantu populations settled on the Eastern coast of South Africa, extending from the neighbourhood of St Lucia Bay (28° Lat. S.) on the Natal Coast up to the Sabie River to the North (1). Thonga are to be found therefore in four of the present South African states: In Natal (Amatongaland), the Transvaal (Leydenbourg, Zoutpansberg and Waterberg districts), in Rhodesia and mostly in Portuguese East Africa (Lourenço Marques, Inhambane and Mozambique Company districts). The Thonga border on the Zulus and the Swazis southwards; westwards on the Ba-Mbayi, Ba-Lauti and other Suto-Pedi clans in the Transvaal; northwards on the Venda and Ba-Nyai in the Zoutpansberg and Rhodesia, and on the Ndjao near the Sabie; and eastwards on the Tonga near Inhambane and on the Ba-Chopi, North of the mouth of the Limpopo.

The tribe comprises a certain number of clans. Those clans form six groups which speak the various dialects of the Thonga language.

(1) There are two rivers called Sabie in the Thonga Territory; one is the Sabie of the South which runs in the Leydenburg district and joins the Nkomati not far from Kil. 53 of the Lourenço Marques-Transvaal line and the other, the one here refered to, comes from Rhodesia and flows into the Indian Ocean not far from the 21° lat. South.

II. *Tribe, Groups and Clans.*

It is necessary first of all to define clearly the precise meaning of these three terms.

We reserve the term *tribe* for the totality of the Thonga nation. This word is frequently used to designate the smaller national units which are called after some old chief whose descendants are still reigning, like Tembe, Khosa, Nkuna, etc. We prefer for the sake of clearness to call those small units *clans* as there is certainly a great ressemblance between them and the Scottish clans. As a rule all men belonging to a clan bear the name of the old chief who is more or less considered as being the ancestor of them all. In the Tembe country most of the people will salute each other with these words : " Shawan Tembe, good morning, Tembe "! But Tembe, the name of the clan means not only a group of people but a certain part of the country South of Delagoa Bay. In that country, men of other clans have settled. There are also sub-clans of the Tembe clan which have already adopted special salutations because they have formed collateral branches of the big Tembe family. However the term *clan* is the best, I think, to designate that kind of national unit as its origin is essentially familial. Now some of those clans, those which occupy the same tract of country, form *groups* because they speak the same dialect of the Thonga language.

III. *The generic Name of the Tribe.*

As we shall see, there is no true national unity amongst the Thonga. They are hardly conscious that they form a definite nation and therefore they possess no common name for it. The name *Thonga* (pronounce t + aspirated h, not the English th) was applied to them by the Zulu or Ngoni invaders who enslaved most of their clans between 1815 and 1830. The

origin of this Zulu name is probably the term *Ronga* which means Orient (buronga = dawn) and by which the clans round Lourenço Marques used to call themselves. According to the phonetic laws of the two languages *R* in Ronga becomes *Th* when pronounced by the Zulu. (Ex. Randja, to love, in Ronga is thanda in Zulu ; raru, three, thathu.) This word Thonga became a nickname which, in the mouth of the Zulu, was almost the equivalent of slave and they applied it to the whole Thonga stock ; the appellation is not liked by the Thonga, but I know of no other which would be preferable to it.

Strange to say, the Thonga of the Northern Clans, especially those of the Bilen and Djonga groups, like to call themselves *Tjonga*, the Hlengwe *Tsonga*. This word is perhaps originally the same as Ronga and may have meant also people of the East, although the *R* of the Ronga dialect does not permute regularly in *Tj* and *Ts* in the Northern clans; but this meaning is doubtful and has at any rate been forgotten. Another name which is much used amongst white people to designate the Thonga is the word *Shangaan*. Shangaan or Tshangaan was one of the surnames of Manukosi, the Zulu chief who settled on the East Coast and subjugated most of the Thonga at the time of Chaka. It is possible that this name was even older and that it belonged to a chief who lived in the valley of the Lower Limpopo before Manukosi. At any rate, this valley was called Ka Tshangaan and its inhabitants Matshangaan. But this term was never accepted by the Ba-Ronga who consider it as an insult. It is applied in Johannesburg roughly to all the East Coast " boys, " even to the Ba-Chopi who are considered by the Ba-Ronga of Delagoa-Bay as much inferior to them. Its adoption would be objectionable on that account. I recognise that the word Ba-Thonga does not enjoy much more favour and is not quite satisfactory ; however considering that it means originally " people of the East " and that the tribe is indeed living on the Eastern part of South Africa, it ought to be accepted in the course of time without much difficulty.

Let us remark that another tribe, quite different for its lan, guage and ethnographical features, dwelling near Inhambane-

quite close to our Thonga tribe, calls itself Ba-Tonga. But there is no aspirate after *T* and this is enough to distinguish it from our Thonga tribe.

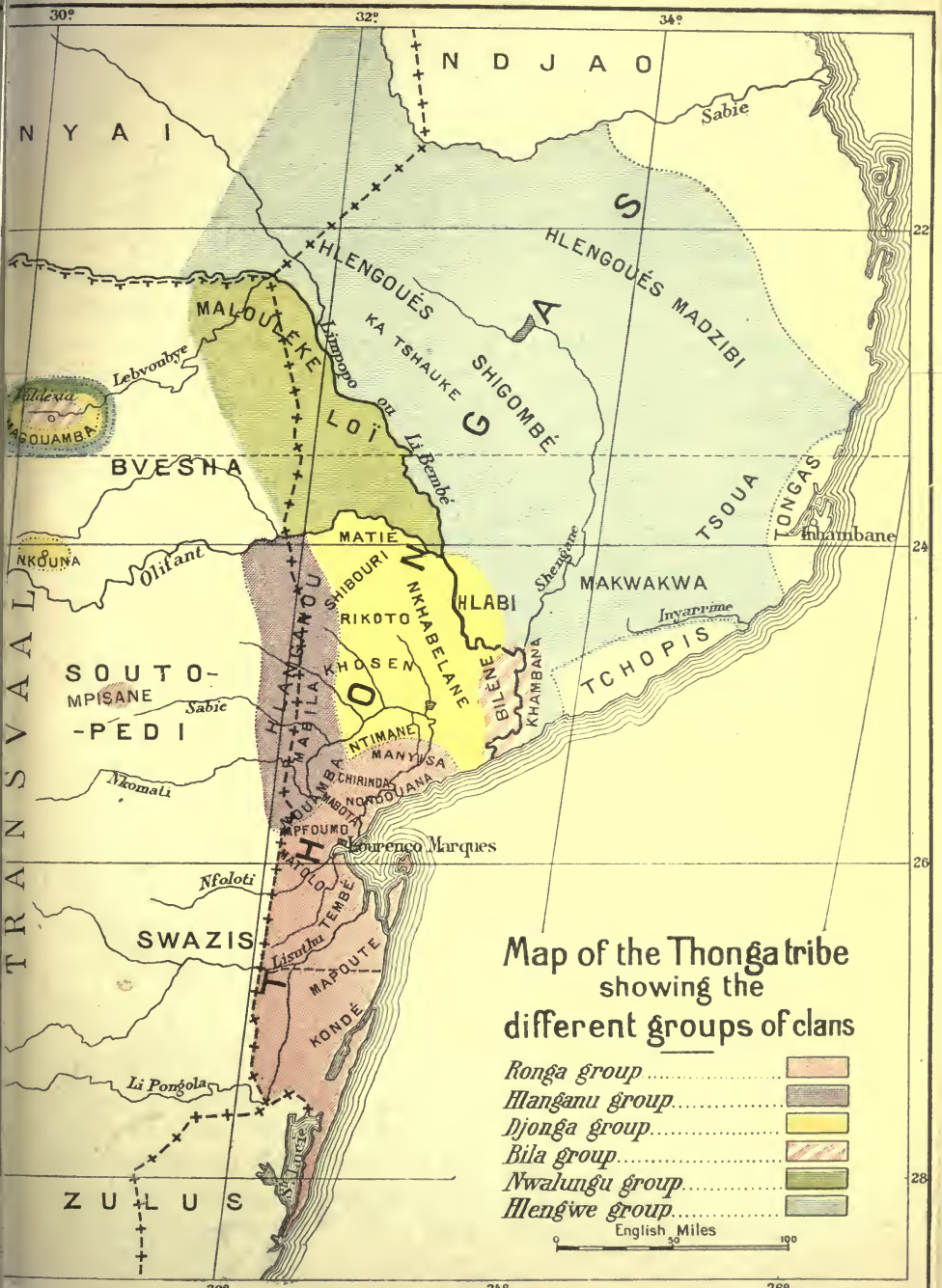
IV. *The six groups of the Thonga clans.*

Let us consider briefly, with the aid of the adjoining map, these six main groups.

1. All round the Bay of Delagoa, we find the *Ronga group*. This word Ronga is a very old one and very convenient, as all these clans consent to be called by it. The real Ronga are, I think, the Mpfumo and the Matjolo clans who are settled on the west of the Bay. South of the Bay is the Tembe clan and its two sub-clans which have become independant : Matutwen and Maputju. North of Lourenço Marques are the Mabota and Mazwaya clans, the country of the latter, which extends on both sides of the estuary of the Nkomati, being called Nondwane. Further North are the two clans of Shirindja and Manyisa which form the transition to the following group. The new generation speaks a purer Ronga dialect, the old one more the Djonga.

Continuing our survey in a Northerly direction, we cross two rivers : the Nkomati and the Olifant. From the Nkomati to the Olifant we meet with the Djonga group and from the Olifant northward with the Nwalungu group. Djonga means South, Nwalungu means North. The Ba-Djonga are the clans South of the Olifant, the Ba-Nwalungu North of it. Such designations have therefore only a relative value and have been evidently invented by people dwelling on the borders of the Olifant. But they are used in many places and I do not find any better ones to designate the two dialects of the Thonga spoken South and North of the river.

2. *The Djonga group* includes the Khosa (in the Khosen or Cossine country) the Rikotjo, the Shiburi and Mathiye clans if we go directly North. On the East of the Djonga clans proper, we find a number of clans settled on both sides of the



Borel.sc. Neuchâtel, Suisse.

Limpopo, in the triangle formed by the Limpopo, the Shengan and the line of the 24° parallel and calling themselves the Ba-Hlabi. They speak a dialect very similar to the Djonga. Their names are as follows from the confluence of the Olifant and the Limpopo to the South : Mapsanganyi, Tsungu, Mavundja, Nkwinika and Makamo. Nkuna was settled not far from this confluence. The clan migrated into the Transvaal in great numbers together with Mavundja and other Hlabi during the wars of Manukosi.

3. *The Nwalungu group* includes two different elements : first the Baloyi or Ba-ka-Baloyi, in the triangle formed by the two rivers northward of their confluence and the Maluleke further North, extending all along the Limpopo as far as its confluence with the Lebvubye River and further along the Lebvubye itself. They occupy there a part of the Low Country of the Transvaal being more or less mixed with the Venda and Nyai population. The Maluleke, according to the native historians, are one half of a larger clan called the Nwanati whose second half is settled near the mouth of the Limpopo under the name of the Makwakwa of Khambane and Ndindane.

These three groups are to be found on the central line, on the axis of the tribe. On their west we meet with the Hlanganu group and on their east with the Bila and Hlengwe groups.

4. *The Hlanganu group* is the smallest of all, including the Nwamba clan in the plain of Delagoa Bay, and the Mabila and Hlanganu clans in the Lebombo hills. The Hlanganu overflow into the Transvaal territory and are scattered in the large desert of the Low Country of the Leydenburg district, together with clans of Suto (Pedi) and Swazi (Mbayi) origin. The Hlanganu dialect is very much akin to the Djonga.

5. *The Bila group* called after the name of Bila, the great and fruitful plain of the Lower Limpopo valley, includes the clans living on both banks of the river. They have had very much to suffer from the Zulu invaders who made their home in that fertile country but their dialect has kept some very peculiar traits.

6. *The Hlengwe group*. In the Djonga dialect, Hlengwe means wealth. I do not know if this be the etymology of the name

Hlengwe as designating all the Thonga population of the East and North-East, from the Limpopo to Inhambane and to the Sabie of the North. The name Hlengwe applies properly only to the Northern part of the Eastern clans. I retain it however provisionally. It seems that that group which forms perhaps half of the tribe comprehends at least three great subdivisions : 1) The *Hlengwe proper*, facing the Maluleke and the Baloyi on the West and extending as far as the Sabie to the North. Their main clans are Tshauke, Mbenzane, Mavube, Magwinyane. 2) *The Ba-Tswa* (1) of Inhambane with the Hlenbengwane, Yingwane, Nkumbi. 3) *The Nwanati* with the Makwakwa, Khambane, Ndindane, bordering the Chopi to the North and the West.

Outside of the proper area of the tribe, we find *colonies of emigrated* Thonga in many parts of the Transvaal. The largest is in the Spelonken district, North of the Zoutpansberg, where they form the majority of the population. There they were called *Magwamba* by the Venda and Bvesha who possessed the country before them. These Magwamba are made up mostly of Hlengwe, Maluleke and Djonga refugees. In the Modjadji country, we find two colonies of Ba-ka-Baloyi with their own chiefs. Near Leydsdorp, a more considerable clan, numbering about 6000 souls, is the Nkuna clan under Muhlaba. On the Sabie of the South, in the plain of the Leydenburg district, another colony has been founded more recently, since the war of the Portuguese against Gungunyane, by the Ngoni and Bila who

(1) This name Ba-Tswa, is the Hlengwe form of Ba-Tjwa, a term by which the Zulu have been commonly designated amongst the Thonga. Ba-Tjwa is probably the corresponding form for Ba-Rwa, an appellation by which the Suto of the Zoutpansberg plains used to call the tribes of the mountains, whence comes the wind called Bu-rwa. The Ba-Rwa properly are the Bushmen as one knows, but under that name were included Bantu of a quite different type. This shows that the natives, in naming foreign tribes, consider the geographical relation between themselves and these tribes much more than their ethnic characteristics : so one very often meets with the word « Bakalanga » which means people of the North The Bakalanga proper are in Rhodesia, but in Lourenço Marques the Khosa tribe is called Bakalanga.

The term Ba-Ngoni is applied to the Zulu as well as Ba-Tjwa, but it is restricted to that clan of the Zulu which was under Manukosi.

did not accept the new rule. They remain under Mpisane a near relative of the late Ngoni potentate.

In the Orichstadt valley and in many other parts of the Leydenburg mountains little colonies of Thonga are met with, as well as in the Waterberg district (especially near Nilstrom) and in the towns of Pretoria and Johannesburg. A good many of the thousands of Shangaane coming every year to the mines settle down definitively in the Town Locations of these great centres.

V. *The numerical strength of the Thonga tribe.*

It is very difficult to ascertain the number of the Thonga. The census of the Transvaal taken on the 17th of April 1904 gives 82,325 souls as being the total Thonga population of that colony; of these, 48,117 are located in the Zoutpansberg. This is a minimum as it has been recognised that at least 10 % ought to be added to these figures; there were scarcely any young men in the kraals when the census was taken. Let us estimate at 100,000 the numerical strength of that part of the tribe which is located in the Transvaal.

As regards Portuguese East Africa, we find some interesting figures in the Mozambique Year Book. The black population of the Lourenço Marques District is estimated at 99,698 souls distributed as follows:

Circumscription of Morakwen (1)	. . . . .	21,510
» » Manyisa	. . . . .	24,183
» » Sabi.	. . . . .	12,960
» » Magudju (Khosen)	. . . .	18,197
» » Maputju	. . . . .	22,848
	Total	99,698

The population of the old region of Gaza which includes Bilen, the Makwakwa, the Baloi, the Hlabi and part of the Hlengwe

(1) I have adopted the native pronunciation of native names and the orthography explained in my Elementary Grammar of the Thonga-Shangaan Language. (Lausanne. Bridel.)

clans, is estimated at 147,995 souls. Gaza having now been incorporated with the Lourenço Marques district, the latter has a native population of 257,693. However the Year Book declares that this is a minimum and states that at least 13,000 ought to be added to this number. Let us admit 270,000 for the Lourenço Marques district. As regards the Inhambane district, the Year Book estimates the total population at 750.088 souls; a very small percentage ought to be deducted for the White and Asiatic population, not more than 1 to 2.000. How many of the remaining thousands belong to our tribe? There are numerous clans of Ba-Chopi on the coast and of Ba-Tonga round Inhambane. However these two tribes occupy but a small area of this large district the interior of which is inhabited by the various Hlengwe clans. So we may admit that at least half of those 750.000 natives are Thonga. If we are correct in this estimate, the total numerical strength of the Thonga tribe would be about 750.000.

VI. *The history of the Thonga tribe.*

Everybody who has had to teach South African natives has been astonished at their memory. It is so good that it sometimes prevents the reasoning faculty developing as it ought to. Some of these people are able to repeat a tale lasting five or ten minutes after having heard it twice or thrice only. It is to be wondered at therefore that they have so few traditions, or rather that these traditions do not reach further back in history. In fact when you investigate what they know of the past, you find first a story about the origins which bears a strongly mythical character; secondly traditions more or less legendary about the migrations of the various clans; thirdly genealogies of the royal family containing eight to ten names and fourthly historical narratives which go back as far as the beginning of the 19th century and which give us the impression of true historical facts. History, amongst the Thonga, begins one hundred years ago only. What took place before is almost entirely forgotten. This fact

shows that, even amongst races possessing good memory, before the introduction of a writing system, traditions regarding the ancient past can hardly be relied upon.

A. Prehistoric Period.

1) *The story of the origin* is this: The first human beings emerged from reeds. Each tribe came into this world with its present characteristics. For instance the Ba-Bvesha, who are great blacksmiths, knew how to forge their iron picks from the first day. They « came out » holding them. The Ba-Ronga group calls the first ancestors of humanity Likalahumba and Nsilambowa, viz. the one who brings a glowing cinder in a shell (the man) and the one who grinds vegetables (the woman). The Ba-Djonga call them: Gwambe and Dzabana. Another story universally believed tells us how death came amongst men by the fault of the chameleon (See Part VI). All these stories are purely mythical and form part of the African Genesis which is met with in most tribes.

2) *Legends about the ancient migrations* of the various clans. Almost every clan pretends to have come from afar and, strange to say, they came from all the points of the compass. Two of their clans, without doubt, come from the North, the Ba-ka-Baloyi and the Tembe. The Ba-ka-Baloyi, they say, came down the valley of the Limpopo in very remote times; they came in such numbers that they opened out a wide track as wide as a wagon road: « It is the old, old road of Gwambe, the first man on earth who emerged from the reed. So well was the road trodden that to this day the grass has not grown over it. » Many Thonga pretend to have seen it, white and straight, stretching from the northern side of the banks of the Limpopo and going southwards through the desert, just like the road over which Attila passed! At a certain place, near a rivulet where the Baloyi rested, one can still see in the rock the print of the mortars of the women. « The stones at that time were not yet hardened, and they retained the marks made by the mortars in that old expedition, the marks also of the hemp pipes of the men and of

their *matshuba*. » (The *matshuba* are the little holes hollowed out by the natives in four rows, as required in their favourite game called *tshuba*).

According to some of the native historians, the Baloyi came from the Ba-Nyai country along with the Nwanati, who also belonged to the Nyai or Kalanga race. They went southwards by that wonderful old road till they reached the sea coast not far from the mouth of the Limpopo. The sight of the sea, that broad unknown river, filled them with great fear. The Baloyi felt they could not remain in such a dangerous neighbourhood and advised the whole party to go back to the North. In the meantime, however, their Nwanati friends had discovered a fruit not common on the African high veld, but very common on the sandy plains of the coast. In shape it was round, about the size of an orange, with a hard outer shell. When broken it was found to contain a number of stones, each wrapped in a delicate, strongly scented pulp, of which the natives prepare an excellent dish. This fruit is called *makwakwa*. "We shall remain here to break open our *makwakwa*" said the Nwanati, and they bade farewell to the Baloyi, who started back to their present abode. Hence the name Makwakwa now given to those Nwanati.

The Nwanati included the Makwakwa of Khambane and the Maluleke. These latter separated from their brethren and came back north, to the country of the Baloyi, led by their ancestor, Mashakatsi. This man who was a great hunter saw that he could easily defeat the Ba-Nyai who were settled in those parts and brought back his followers with him. He became the founder of the dynasty of Maluleke. (For further details about these legends, see Addresses and Papers of the Joint Meeting of British and South African Associations for the Advancement of Science, Johannesburg 1905.)

As regards the Tembe clan, it is said to have come down as far as Delagoa Bay from the Kalanga country by the Nkomati river on a floating island of papyrus and to have crossed the Tembe river and settled to the South of the Bay. An old saying alludes to this arrival and to the conquest of the country :

Phandje, phandje ra nala — Tembe kulu a wela.

As the palm leaf with its numerous feelers — so did the ancestor Tembe when he crossed.

He put his sons in all the districts of the plain to govern in his name. The Tembe people, when they greet each other, sometimes use the salutation Nkalanga, man of the North or of the Kalanga country, and there is little doubt that, notwithstanding the legendary traits in this tradition, the fact itself of the northern origin of these clans is true. In the course of time the chiefs of Matutwen and Maputju, descendants of Tembe, became independant.

Most of the other clans point to Zululand or to Swaziland as having been their first abode which they left to invade the low country of the coast. Mpfumu and Matjolo are both sons of Nhlaruti who is said to have been the first invader; from him sprang their two clans which have become independent from each other, even hostile to each other. The Nondwane families point to the neighbourhood of Komati Port as being the place from which they came. There vere successive invasions of a peaceful character. These people still turn the face of their dead to the West, because the clan has come from the Lebombo hills, and this rite proves that the tradition is well founded. The Nkuna, Khosa, Hlabi also claim the same Western or South-Western origin. Amongst the Ba-Nkuna, some old men say they know the precise place whence their forefather Nkuna started in Zululand and declare that they still have relatives there.

The Hlanganu and Hlengwe seem to have no tradition of this kind. The only one I heard about the Hlengwe is this : Tshauke, their first king, took as his wife the daughter of another chief belonging to the Sono tribe. The Sono knew how to cook their food, the Hlengwe did not : they were still ignorant of fire and used to eat their porridge raw. The son of Tshauke stole a glowing cinder from the Sono and brought it home in a big shell. The Sono were angry and declared war on the Hlengwe; but these latter, having gained new strength because they had been eating cooked food, won the victory. The son of Tshauke was then named Shioki — shahumba — he who brings fire in a shell. This tradition is in con-

nection with the name of the first man Likalahumba which we have just explained and it evidently bears a legendary character.

Which were the races the invaders found in the country ? Their name is still known in some places. In the Khosen Country, they were the Ntimba and Shibambo. In the Nondwane, the Honwana, Mahlangwana and Nkumba. Everybody agrees in saying that they were on a lower scale of civilisation (See Part IV) and that the new comers overcame them easily because they were more intelligent and possessed better weapons.

3) A third source of information regarding the prehistoric times is to be found in the *genealogies of the royal families* which each clan has preserved more or less completely. I have gathered the following : (1)

Mpfumu : Nhlaruti, Mpfumu, Fayi, Maromana, Shilupane, Hasana (who attacked Lourenço Marques in 1868, was banished but was given back his country in 1875; he died in 1878), Hamule, Zihlahla, Nwamantibyane (banished in 1896 to Western Africa where he died).

Tembe : Tembe, Nkupu, Nwangobe, Silambowa, Muhari (1781-1795), Mayeta (1823), Bangwana, Bukutje (1857), Mabayi (banished in 1890), Bukutje II.

Maputju : Maputju was the younger brother of Muhari and made himself independent from him. Muwayi, Makasana (1800-1850), Tlhuma, Musongi or Nozililo (1850), Ngwanazi (who fled to British Amatongaland after the Gungunyana war in 1895).

Nondwana : Libombo (probably reigning before the invasion), Masinga, Ngomana, Matinana, Makwakwa, Papele, Khobete (who rebelled against the Portuguese in 1859), Mapunga, Mahazule.

Mabota : Mabota, Magwenyana, Lawulana, Magumbin, Mbakana, Nwatjonga.

Nwamba : Kopo-Nwamba, Rihati, Sindjini, Malengana, Nkolele, Mangoro, Mudlayi, Nwangundjuwana.

Khosa : Khosa, Ripanga, Mabone, Molelemane, Ripindje, Magudjulane, Nshalati Pukwana, Magudju, Shongele.

(1) Compare E. Torre do Valle. Diccionario shironga-portuguez. Lourenço Marques. Imprensa Nacional 1906.

Nkuna : Nkuna, Shitlhelane, Rinono, Kulalen, Nwarinyekana, Muhlari, Ribye-ra ku-tika, Shiluvane, Mohlaba.

Maluleke : Mashakatsi, Dlamana, Shitanda, Shihala, Nkuri, Mhinga, Sunduza.

These genealogies, as one can see, generally contain eight to ten names. The list of Maputju chiefs has six only because this dynasty is not so old and did not begin before the end of the XVIIIth century. But all the others are longer. I do not pretend they are absolutely correct. In the same clan, there are sometimes variations according to the informants. There may have been links omitted in the chain because, for the natives, a grandson is a son just as a son properly speaking. On the other hand, the law of succession amongst the Thonga calls to chieftainship the younger brothers of the deceased chief ; so some of these names may very well belong to brothers. Therefore it does not at all follow that eight names correspond to eight different generations. If it were so, estimating a generation at 30 years, we should conclude that the first chief lived some 250 years ago, viz. in 1650; but I have found a conclusive proof that, for some of these genealogies, the first name in the list was already known in 1550. So we must consider these genealogies as being in fact too short. Many names must have been dropped in the course of time.

The proof to which I am alluding has been afforded by the Portuguese reports published in the Mémoire addressed in 1873 to the President of the French Republic who was called to act as mediator in the conflict between England and Portugal about the right of possession of the Southern part of the Bay (Lisboa. Imprensa Nacional). In this interesting publication, we find the oldest documents relative to the Bay and, amongst others, we read the following account in a Report of the Portuguese chronicler Perestrello, written in 1554 : « Into the Bay flow three rivers... The first one to the South, is called Zembe. It separates the land of a king of that name from the dominion of the king Nyaka... The second is the river of the Holy Spirit or of Lourenço Marques. It separates the land of Zembe from the land of two other chiefs whose names are Rumu and Mina Lebombo. The third and last is the Manhisa, so called after a Kafir of that

name who governs there. » In these statements we can easily recognize the names of the actual clans of Tembe (Zembe), Mpfumu (Rumu), Lebombo and Manyisa. Those names were already known then and the chiefs to whom they apply were settled in the same country where they now are or not far from it. The chief Nyaka has left his name to the Inyak Island. It seems that his dynasty was then reigning over a larger tract of country than now. It is possible that he was confined to the island where his descendants now live by the military operations of Maputju. Let us remark moreover that Zembe and Manhisa were names applied not only to those two chiefs but to *rivers*. Zembe is the actual Mi-Tembe which flows between the Tembe and Matjolo countries and Manhisa is evidently the Nkomati which crosses the Manhisa country some fifty kilometers higher than the estuary. Should the natives have already called rivers after the name of these chiefs, it is probable that the chiefs themselves were already dead and had been living in a more or less remote past. All these arguments tend to show that four or five hundred years ago at least the chiefs Tembe, Mpfumu, Manhisa, Libombo, all of whom still have descendants, were already in the country round Delagoa Bay. I do not think any scientifically accurate statement could be made going so far back into the past and I propose this as a landmark in the history of South African Natives.

B. Historic Period.

Having tried to fix what is historical in the prehistoric period, we now come to the XIXth Century; and here we find a great amount of detailed information in which there may be some legendary traits but which as a whole seems to be entirely trustworthy. It does not suit our plan to narrate here all these facts. Such a work would lead us much too far. Let us only say that the history of the Thonga tribe during the whole of the XIXth century was dominated by the invasion and migrations of the Zulu conquerors who left Chaka and for their own sake enslav-

ed the poor Amathonga of the coast, just as Mosilekatsi did among the Mashona. These Ba-Ngoni were led by Manukosi ; he found all the Thonga clans living according to the old Bantu style, each for itself, without national unity, and he conquered them easily and tried to impose on them the military system of dominion created by Dingiswayo and Chaka. Many of the Thonga clans emigrated into the Transvaal at that time (between 1835-1840) rather than submit to Manukosi ; as the Boers had settled in the country and as the Ngoni chiefs always feared a war with the Whites more than anything else, these Thonga were left undisturbed by Manukosi. They belonged to the Nkuna, Baloyi, Mavundja clans and founded numerous colonies in the Transvaal. Manukosi reigned quietly for more than twenty years in the Limpopo valley and as far as the Mosapa (Ba-Ndjao country, North of the Sabie). His death took place in 1856. But then a dreadful war of succession still known as « the war » (mubango) raged for more than six years over the whole area of the Thonga tribe. Two brothers disputed the chieftainship. According to the Thonga law of succession, Muzila was the legal heir ; but the Ngoni law was against him and in favour of his younger brother Mawewe. Mawewe was then proclaimed ; Muzila's followers fled to the Spelonken ; the new king however behaved as a cruel despot and, with the help of the Portuguese and of the Ronga warriors, Muzila defeated him decisively on the Sabie River from August 17 to 20 1862. The Ba-Ronga always remained independent from the Ngoni chiefs, being directly under the Portuguese authorities.

A Portuguese called Albasini who acted during all that time as a chief of the Thonga of the Spelonken played a considerable part in these events.

When Muzila died, his son Gungunyane succeeded him. The Ba-Ngoni had greatly diminished in number. In 1890 there were not more than a few hundred of them in the whole country. However they were holding it very firmly and the Thonga hated them. Therefore when the war between the Portuguese and some Ronga clans in 1894 led to difficulties between the Whites and Gungunyane, the Ngoni chief was abandoned by most of his

people, even by his uncle Nkuyu : his capital Mandlakasi was burnt and he himself was captured by Musinho d'Albuquerque at the end of the year 1895 ; the despotic rule of the Zulus came to an end and it has been replaced by the Portuguese administration much to the advantage of the Thonga tribe.

VII. *Ethnic characteristics of the Thonga tribe.*

What are the characteristic features of our tribe in regard to the other ethnic groups of South African Bantu, especially to the Zulu and Suto ? We shall try to sketch them briefly on three main points : language, mental and physical character.

1) *The Language of the Thonga.* It would be useless to give here an elaborate description of the Thonga language : this work has been done already for the Ronga dialect in my « Grammaire Ronga » published with the help of the Portuguese Governement in 1896 (Bridel, Lausanne) and for the Djonga dialect in my Elementary Grammar of the Thonga-Shangaan language which I published at the beginning of the Thonga-English Pocket Dictionary compiled by my colleague the Rev. Ch. Châtelain (Bridel, Lausanne 1908). I consider the language here only from an ethnological point of view, that is to say only to ascertain the proper place of the Thonga amongst the Bantu.

The Thonga idiom belongs to the *South-Eastern group of the Bantu languages* and is related both to Suto and Zulu. All these languages have in common certain grammatical features which distinguish them from other groups. Amongst them I might mention : the frequent use of the lateral sounds hl, dl, tl, the presence of seven or eight distinct classes of nouns, recognizable by prefixes which correspond in those three languages, the formation of the locative by a suffix ini or ng and not by prefixes, the consequent absence of the three locative classes pa, ku, mu, etc. It has been asserted by people who have not studied Thonga carefully that it was merely a dialect of Zulu. This

is not true. (1) Thonga is altogether different from Zulu and Suto, though it closely ressembles both, especially Zulu.

Relation to Suto. As regards Suto, its phonetic system is characterised by the absence of a certain phenomenon common to most Bantu languages, to Thonga and Zulu especially. The Bantu phonology is dominated by a peculiar nasalisation of certain consonants when prefixed by an *n* or an *m*. This *n* or *m* is generally the prefix of the class mu-ba, mu-mi or in-tin (zin), and has the power of producing marvellous changes in this initial consonant. But, in Suto, this prefix is dropped altogether except in a few cases and those nasalised sounds are almost entirely missing. As regards some other grammatical features, Suto, especially the Pedi dialect of Suto, is not so far from Thonga. It is not possible to quote many instances; let us only remark that Suto possesses the roots *loya* for witchcraft and *yila* for taboo which are also present in Thonga and are lacking in Zulu.

Relation to Zulu. The great difference between Thonga and Zulu as regards phonetics is the complete absence of the three characteristic Zulu clicks (2) in Thonga. The Thonga have no clicks at all except in a few words borrowed from the Zulu like nqolo, wagon. Certain letters regularly permute from one language into the other: *Z* of the Zulu is *t* in Thonga; *r* of the Thonga is generally replaced by *l* or *th* in Zulu.

Originality of Thonga. But though Thonga and Zulu resemble each other in many respects, Thonga possesses some peculiar features which prove its originality. As regards its sounds, it is characterised by the frequent occurence of a labial sibilant sound, a little like *ps* pronounced with a kind of whistling and which corresponds to the Zulu *z* in the plural of the class isi-izi. It is further charac-

(1) Thonga and Zulu *do not understand* each other. In linguistic terminology, I think one ought never to designate as dialect of a language an idiom which people speaking that language cannot understand at all. It is a different language altogether and we ought to keep the term dialect for the various forms of a single language which are of such a nature that people speaking them can understand each other more or less perfectly.

(2) The Zulu clicks are, as it is generally believed, of Hottentot origin. No wonder they were not adopted by the Thonga who do not seem to have had any contact with Hottentots.

terised by some special nasalisations of initial consonants. *N+k* which remains *nk* in Zulu becomes *h* in Thonga: for instance the Zulu *nkosi*, chief, is *hosi* in Thonga. (It is *Khushi* in Suto-Pedi where the initial *n* has been dropped). There is a long list of words of the in-tin class which show this phenomenon (homu, ox; huku, hen, etc.). The initial *r* when preceeded by *n* becomes *nh* (*nh*ena, warrior; ti*nh*aru, three; cf. *r*aru, three, bu*r*ena, bravery, mo*r*ena, in Suto, chief). This seems to be the primitive combination. In some other cases it becomes *ntjh* in Ronga and *ndj* in Djonga; (*r*ako, behind, *ntjh*ako, *ndj*ako). These two *r* probably have a different origin in the Ur-Bantu. These transformations are peculiar to Thonga.

As regards morphology, Thonga has some striking peculiarities: a great riches of demonstrative forms due to the presence of a kind of demonstrative particle *le* or *la* and also a great development of the participial forms of the verbs. In its conjugation, the verb is quite as well provided with auxiliaries as any other South African language and we could easily discover in Thonga the one or two thousand combinations which have been counted in the Zulu conjugation.

Thonga, for all these reasons, is a language apart which has evolved itself with its different dialects.

The six dialects. We have tried to classify them under six names, but this classification is, of course, purely formal: in fact each of them presents transition forms and they coalesce with each other through a great number of intermediary forms (1). This is a very striking fact. I take for instance the word *ririmi* which means, « tongue » in Djonga, North of the Nkomati River. Here we find two *r* pronounced more or less as rolled *r*, never gutturally. If we go somewhat further to the South, to the Nondwane, ririmi becomes *rjirjimi*. The *r* becomes more palatal. We reach Mpfumu: there the word has changed into *lidjimi*. The first *r* has become a pure dental, the second a palato-dental (with a kind of cerebralisation). There is a regular evolution of the

(1) In Appendix N° 1, I intend giving a list of the most intersting words showing how they are pronounced in all parts of the tribe in order to characterise the various dialects.

sound from one dialect to the other. The same process might be followed for *b* which is a true explosive *b* in the South of the Bay, becomes *v*, a fricative labial and sometimes almost *w*, a semi-vowel, when we go to the North. This regularity in the geographical relation of the sounds is very clear and it shows that the language must have developed undisturbed as a tree which puts forth its branches, these branches separating more and more from each other till the dialects are formed, each with its peculiar sounds.

This fact is all the more marvellous when we remember that the Thonga tribe has been made up of populations of various origin which have invaded the country, coming from different parts. The only explanation which accounts for these two facts apparently contradictory is that those invaders have adopted the language of the primitive populations and have not influenced it enough to prevent it following its natural evolution... If this be true, the Thonga language ought to be considered as the oldest element of the life of the tribe and we can understand then how it has given to it its unity.

It is true that the course of events, from a linguistic point of view, has been totally different since the Zulu invasion of the XIXth Century. The Ba-Ngoni of Manukosi did not adopt the Thonga as their language : they kept their Zulu dialect and most men of the Thonga clans knew and used it also beside their own national tongue. But this difference can easily be explained. The Zulu generals who followed the example of Chaka, Manukosi and Moselekatsi amalgamated clans and tribes under their military rule and could not subsist unless they maintained a despotic domination over them; they were an aristocratic race and considered their language as superior. Ruling by fear and by the sword, they purposely remained aliens amongst the enslaved tribes. Quite different was the spirit of the ancient invaders of 1400 or 1500 A. D. They had not such an ideal of vast domination; they operated on a much smaller scale : they were satisfied when they took the chieftainship from the aborigines and quickly mingled with them, married their daughters (as they still do) and so became one with them.

Would the Ba-Ngoni have been able in course of time to establish their Zulu dialect instead of the Thonga, if the Portuguese had not broken their power ? It is impossible to say. They had succeeded in imposing all their Zulu terminology in military matters. Meanwhile the women were not learning Zulu and the women are the best safeguards of the purity of the language amongst primitive people. Therefore I do not think they would have been able to uproot the old language which must have been spoken for many centuries in Thonga territory.

My conclusion is then that the Thonga language was already spoken by the primitive occupants of the country more than 500 years ago and that, together with a certain number of customs, it formed the great bond which bound the Thonga clans together in past centuries.

2) *Mental characteristics of the Thonga.* We ask only how the Thonga compare with the Zulu or Suto as regards character and especially from a military point of view.

Having had the opportunity to witness a war in which the Nkuna chief Muhlaba was allied with the Pedi chief Maaghe, in the Zoutpansberg, I can testify that the Thonga had ten times as much military spirit as the Pedi. I saw the two armies, the same day, preparing for the same battle. The Thonga were armed to the teeth, forming a great circle, all standing, shouting their war songs, gesticulating, jumping, imploring their chief to allow them to start. The Pedi warriors were sitting under trees, taking their snuff and apparently as calm as any other day.

Phot. G. Liengme

A « zuluised » Thonga, warrior.

During the Gungunyane war, the Thonga were brave, at least those who were not entirely dependent on the Ngoni king who had not allowed his warriors to kill white men. The Ronga of Mpfumu especially showed great courage and endurance and those who served the Portuguese in their Angola war have been praised as being very steady and reliable.

On the other hand everything seems to prove that military ability is not an ancient feature of the Thonga character and that it has been imparted to them precisely by the Zulu who taught them the art of fighting during the last century, pushing them to the front in their battles and calling them « Mabuyandlela », « those who open the way ». Before the Ngoni invasion, the Thonga armies were ignorant of the *mukhumbi* viz. the armed circle of warriors which is at the base of the Zulu military system. (See Part IV) : they used to dispose themselves in a straight line and, in their battles very few men were killed. They were normal Bantu clans, viz. people living peacefully, occasionally quarreling with their neighbours. The idea of conquest, of vast dominion, the system of an armed nation which Chaka and his followers pursued, was something new amongst South African natives and was probably borrowed by Dingiswayo from the Whites. This fact ought not to be ignored.

Under a just European supervision, there is no probability that the Thonga tribe will change its peaceful and mild charcter.

3) *Physical characteristics of the Thonga.* It cannot be said that the Thonga possess a very distinct and unique physical type. They are generally of a dark brown colour, sometimes purely black, much darker than the Suto. As a whole, their external appearance bears a much closer resemblance to that of the Zulu, but, as regards face and stature, they vary very much. You may meet Thonga with typical negro faces, broad lips, flat noses, prominent cheek bones, and the same day, at the same place, other men of the same clan with a much narrower face, thin lips and pointed noses. It seems that there are two different types amongst them, the coarse type which was perhaps more wide-spread amongst the primitive populations and which has been kept very distinct by the Ba-Chopi of the Coast and the finer one which belonged perhaps to the invaders and both types have inter-crossed in all possible ways. There seems also to have been an Arabic influence on some of the clans. A Native Commissioner in the Zoutpansberg has noticed

amongst some of the Thonga settlements striking Semitic features, arched noses, thin lips. Has there been any intermarriage between the Thonga and those Arabs who settled on the East Coast long before it was discovered by Vasco de Gama ? Who can say ?

FIRST PART

THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

CHAPTER I

The Evolution of a man from Birth to Death

A. INFANCY

I. *The day of the Birth.*

When a new member of the tribe is expected, when the mother begins to feel the pangs of childbirth (ku lunwa), the father sends word to the midwives of the neighbourhood and all of them come at once. They are called *tinsungakati* (1). Every woman having some experience in that department is a midwife, no special training being required for the qualification.

The *place chosen* for the delivery (phuluka) is generally the back of the hut (mahosi) where the pregnant woman lives. Some mats are brought and erected in such a way as to form a small enclosure. This is done to protect the woman from indiscrete onlookers. Should there be enough bush to hide her, mats are not used. A big wooden mortar is given to her to lean against it during her pains. The whole place is called by a special term *fukwen* or *busaken* (the nest). Should the birth be

(1) This word is interesting. Its termination *ati* is the proper feminine suffix which is found in nsati, wife, hulukati, female elephant, Nkomati, river of that name, the rivers being considered as female by the Thonga.

difficult, the divinatory bones will probably be consulted and the woman will be removed to another place, inside the hut or somewhere else.

The baby can be born without any help, but as a rule the midwives consider it their duty to submit their patient to a *long and painful manipulation*, to a regular kneading, in order, as they say, to obtain the expulsion of the child and of the after-birth all at once. They sometimes succeed in that feat! They also often hurt the mother severely. The midwives think that they must be very rough and they have no pity at all on the poor woman. Sometimes the mother loses all her natural feelings in this painful process. I have heard of cases when she refuses to let the child come to the light, bites her helpers, runs away. Hence perhaps the attitude adopted by the midwives. The mother must not *fahla nwana*, viz. break down the child, a technical expression to designate unhappy births.

During the whole labour, it is taboo (1) for the mother to eat or to drink anything; she would kill the child if she did so. Of course no man must attend the birth; neither must girls come near. A newly married woman may be allowed to enter the enclosure in order to «be taught». It is also forbidden for the female parents of the woman, her sisters, even her mother to come *fukwen*; they might be ashamed if their relative behaved badly and «broke her child». They will not come till the following day, when they hear that everything has gone on smoothly, when the father will kill a hen for them.

As soon as the child has made his appearance one of the midwives ties the *umbilical cord* (likabana) near the navel and cuts it about three inches from it. The little sore is anointed with a kind of fat; the bit of cord remaining with the baby is

(1) We translate by taboo the Thonga word *yila* which means everything prohibited. I beg to give the following provisional definition of this term which will be found from the first to the last page of this book : Any object, any act, any person that implies a danger for the individual or for the community and that must consequently be avoided, this object, act or person being under a kind of ban. As often as possible, I shall add the explanation which natives give of those taboos.

cared for with great attention : it generally falls off at the end of the first week and this is the signal for the end of the period of confinement.

The after-birth, the *placenta*, is also looked for with much anxiety : it is called *yindlu ya nwana*, the "house of the child", or *hlalu*. When it is delayed too long, the midwives begin to fear "because the blood which is inside has not all come out and will kill the mother". The placenta is generally buried deep behind the hut on the spot where the birth has taken place; but some prefer to bury it inside the house, fearing the dogs might unearth it, which is taboo.

The child is then washed with water. This water is thrown away as polluted by the blood of the birth, which is taboo.

Naming the child. On the day of birth or on one of the following ones the child receives his name (bito). There are four principal ways of choosing this.

1) Often the parents give their offspring *the name of a chief* as Musongi, Makasana, Muzila, etc. It flatters their vanity!

2) But frequently the parents like to recall a name of the old times (pfusha bito dja khale), the name of one of the ancestors, because it is a nice thing to remember them. They go so far as to consult the bones. A name is proposed and if the bones in falling do not give a favourable indication, another is tried till they feel sure that the die "has spoken". (1)

3) Or it may be that somebody asks the favour of giving his name to the new born child; a friend of the family may do so but it is often also a traveller who happens to be in the village and to whom this privilege is accorded. He will "*name himself in the child*" (kutitshula ka nwana). This fact will establish a special relation between this person and the child, a relation which bears some resemblance to that of a godfather to his godson. Once a year he will come and give "his name" (viz. the child) some presents. When the child is able to

(1) The christian natives like to ask their missionary to choose the name perhaps for a similar reason.

travel, the mother will go with him to pay a visit to his "friend in name" (mabitokulobye).

4) A fourth way of naming new born children is to choose a name having some connection with the *circumstances of the birth*. Should a child have seen the light when his mother was travelling, he will be called *Ndlelen* viz. "on the way", "on the road"; should the birth have taken place under a tree, the name of that tree will be chosen, put in the locative case and you will meet many Thonga called Nkanyen (under the terebinth), Nkwakwen (under the Strychnos), Nkuwen (under the fig-tree), etc.; or Mpfulen (in the rain), Marumbin (in the ruins), Mawewe, if the child is born during the war waged by the chief of that name, etc. When General Beyers was running over Zoutpansberg with his commando, the natives admiring the swiftness of his movements named many children after him.

The names of the Thonga are the same for the two sexes. There are only two of them which cannot be employed indiscriminately for girls and boys. *Nhwanin* is a girl's name as it means "girl" and *Nwandjise* a boy's name as it means "boy".

All these birth-names are abandoned later on, generally at the circumcision school or at the age of puberty in the clans where the custom of circumcising has disappeared; boys and girls then choose new names. The men and women who undergo the initiation adopt a new name. So do those subjected to the treatment for possession who take the name of their pretended possessor when he has made himself known. I refer the reader to Appendix II for some more information regarding Thonga names.

Premature Birth. When a child is born prematurely and is very small and delicate, he is wrapped in leaves of the castor-oil plant and put into a big pot which is then exposed to the heat of the sun. This is a true incubator and this treatment is said to be attended with success (Tobane).

Protracted Births and Illegimate Births. There would seem to be no relation between these; but, for the Thonga, on the contrary, a protracted and difficult birth proves that the child is not legitimate. This conviction is so strong that when a woman

knows that the child which she is going to bear is not the son of her husband (nuna) but of a lover (mbuye), she will admit this secretely to the principal midwife in order to spare herself the pains of a difficult birth, as it is taboo to bear a "child of adultery" hiding the fact: it would cause the mother untold suffering.

Therefore, if the delivery lasts too long, the midwife will begin to have doubts as to the legitimacy of the child. The first thing she will do is to send word to the husband. He knows what it means. He takes in his *shifado* (1) a little of his *semen*, mixes it with water in a shell of sala (the big round fruit of the Strychnos) and the woman drinks it. It may be that then the child will "feel his father" if the husband is really his father and that this will bring the birth to a prompt conclusion; but if this result is not attained, it is proof that the child is really illegitimate and the midwife will force the woman to confess her guilt and the name of her lover. Should she have had many of them and hide some of their names "the womb will refuse" (khuri dji ta yala) and the birth will be possible only when the confession is complete.

Should an illegitimate child be born without this delay, he will come to the light with his hands closed and refuse to take the breast. This will give the midwife the opportunity of extorting the confession from the mother. These women practise a special kind of divination: they take a broken pot, put pumpkin seeds into it and place it on the fire. If the seeds, instead of burning to cinder, explode with noise, this is proof that the woman is guilty. Each explosion means a lover and all their names must be revealed. (Tobane.) This confession is strictly private. The midwives will consider it a professional duty not to divulge the secret to anyone, even the father. But the mother must confess, as it is absolutely necessary that the true father of a child be known on the day of its birth.

It is taboo for the lover of the woman to come to the door

(1) See Note 1 at the end of the volume, in the collection of latin notes written for medical men and ethnographers.

of the hut after the birth of the illegitimate child as long as the umbilical cord has not fallen off. The child would die. Even later on, should the mother be sitting on the threshold of the hut with the baby in her arms, and that man should pass on the street in front of them, one of the midwives will go (has she not heard the confession ?) and take between her fingers a pinch of sand from the footprints of the lover, and, without a word, will throw it on the fontanella of the baby. If the husband happens to be present, he will know by witnessing this act that he is not the true father. I do not think he will be very angry. The child is his and, if it is a girl, nobody else will "eat the oxen"! For him this is the main consideration!

As regards the birth of twins, we shall, later on, study the strange customs which accompany it : in the olden times one of the children was killed ; except in such a case, no child is ever put to death wilfully on the day of its birth.

II. *The first week or Confinement Period.*

From the day of the birth till the moment when the umbilical cord falls, seven days may elapse : this forms a special period called *busahana*, which is the period of confinement for both mother and child. It will be concluded by the special ceremony of the child's first outing marked by the rite of the broken pot. During these seven or eight days, *the mother* is restricted to a special diet and this is a true "marginal period" for her. She is absolutely outside the pale of society. The diet is prescribed by the family doctor, the one who knows how to treat children, and consists of a special dish prepared with Kafir corn (1) (mabele) and called *shimbimbi* with which special medicines have been mixed. The aim of this medication (khwebela busahana)

(1) This use of Kafir corn in this and other old rites proves the antiquity of this cereal. It is probably the first which was known to the natives. Maize is quite modern amongst the Thonga though the time of its introduction is not known. See Part IV.

is twofold: firstly to expel the unclean blood which follows the birth and which is a very great taboo and secondly to stimulate the production of the milk. This food is cooked in a special pot (shikhwebelo sha busahana) and is eaten not with the hands, as some particles of the unclean blood might enter it and cause the mother to become phthisic, but with a special spoon.

Both the pot and the spoon will be fastened over the entrance of the hut, inside (shirangen sha nyangwa), at the end of this period of seclusion.

A fowl is also killed during these first days, a hen if the child is a girl, a cock if it is a boy. Some medicinal powder is poured into the broth and the mother drinks it and eats part of the meat, the husband eating the remainder. This little luxury is indulged in as it helps the mother to recover her strength sooner; she is attended to by her own mother who has been summoned as soon as the birth has been satisfactorily effected and who helps her to feed the child.

As regards *the child*, the umbilical cord is anointed every day; he begins to take the breast and drink the "*milombyana*", the great medicine which we shall describe later on.

During these days many taboos must be observed:

The *husband* is not allowed to enter the hut under any pretext; this is not on account of his being unclean, quite the contrary. A birth does not contaminate the father amongst the Ba-Thonga as it does in other tribes. He is not obliged to undergo any medication. His exclusion from the conjugal hut is due entirely to the fact that his wife is polluted by the blood of the lochia, and he would run the greatest danger to himself if he came near.

Excluded also are *all married people* (bakhili) viz. all those who have regular sexual intercourse. Should they touch the child, he would die. If however a woman wishes very much to go and see the new-born, she must abstain from relations with her husband during two days. Then she can be admitted into the hut. On the other hand young girls are welcome in the hut, but they must not kiss the baby during these first days. "It is not yet firm; it is only water", as they say; later on, when it

begins to laugh and to play, they may kiss it. Even the father may do so then; when he comes back from a journey, he holds it in his arms and kisses it on the temple. Supposing that the umbilical cord has now fallen off normally, the confinement period will be at an end. This termination is marked by two rites:

The mother of the delivered woman will have *to smear with clay the floor of the hut*. This is the great cleansing act which brings to an end a marginal period. It takes away all the dangerous blood and the husband as well as all the other people of the village will be allowed to enter the hut.

The second act is *the rite of the broken pot* (ku tjibelela shirengelen, viz. to make fire under the shirengele, the bit of broken pot used for the purpose). This is a medical treatment and a religious ceremony combined. It is performed by the family doctor on the threshold of the hut in the following way: he puts into this piece of broken pottery pieces of skin of all the beasts of the bush: antelopes, wild cats, elephants, hippopotami, rats, civet cats, hyenas, elands, snakes of dangerous kinds and roasts them till they burn. The smoke then rises and he exposes the child to it for a long time: the body, face, nose, mouth. The baby begins to cry; he sneezes, he coughs; it is just what is wanted; then the doctor takes what remains of the pieces of skin, grinds them, makes a powder, mixes it with *tihuhlu* (1) grease of the year before last and consequently hard enough to make an ointment. With this ointment, he rubs the whole body of the child, especially the joints which he extends gently in order to assist the baby's growth.

All this fumigation and manipulation is intended to act as a preventive. Having been so exposed to all the external dangers, dangers which are represented by the beasts of the bush, the child may go out of the hut. He is now able "to cross the foot prints of wild beasts" (tjemakanya mitila) without harm. Snakes will not bite him, at any rate their bite will not hurt him; lions will not kill him. The remainder of the powder is

(1) The tihuhlu are the seeds of the nkuhlu tree known under the name of mafureira. They are oleaginous and the fat (mafura) obtained from them is very much used for external applications amongst the Thonga.

put into a little bit of reed closed at both ends which the mother has to carry with her during the whole nursing period in order to continue the treament.

This rite of the broken pot is also the great preventive remedy against the much dreaded ailment of babies, convulsions. If a child suffers from this, they will say: "a tlalile shirengelen," viz. "he did not find any help in the broken pot" and the parents will go to another doctor whose drugs are more powerful to have the child once more exposed to the smoke. It may even be that a grown-up man will undergo this treatment again, if he has been sick with convulsions, but, in this case, the broken pot with its pieces of skin is put on the head of the patient which has been first covered with a wisp of cuscuta (hare dja yendjeyendje). The great aim of all the medication of children by the "milombyana" is also to fight against convulsions, as weshall see.

The Thonga child is always received into this world with great joy by the whole family. If it is a girl, it means oxen to buy a wife later on for one of the sons; therefore it means increase not only to the wealth but to the number of the members of the family. If it is a boy, there is no direct material enrichment, but the clan has been strengthened and the name of the father is glorified and perpetuated. In the case of the birth of a first born child (nwana wa matibula), a special ceremony is performed at the end of the first week. When the grandmother has smeared the hut, she goes home, summons all the female relatives, sometimes as many as ten or fifteen; they take with them food, ochre and fat prepared for this purpose. Two or three men accompany them. They enter the village of the child executing a special danse called *khana*, and singing the following song (which is the proper song to glorify a first born):

I celebrate my pot which has done *ngelebendje*...

They compare the child with a pot of clay which has gone through the firing process. It has been tried as one always tries a pot by letting it fall to the ground; but it is not shattered because it had not cracked in the furnace, it has kept intact!

This is what is meant by the descriptive adverb ngelebendje.

Then they smear the baby, the mother, the father, everybody in the village with ochre. It is a great feast. A goat will be killed, if possible, because the father and mother have "found a village" (kuma muti) by the child, they have "grown roots" (mila mitju). This is a law, but its omission is not taboo. When the grandparents do not perform this ceremony, it is an insult to the parents of the child but no evil consequence will follow.

For any subsequent children, the feast will be reduced to the presentation by the grandmother of a basket of food to "*tlangela nwana*", viz to "celebrate the child".

III. *The Nursing Period.*

South-African women with her child in the ntehe.

The little child has been taken out of the confinement hut (humesha busahanen). He is now allowed to go outside. The nursing period begins then and will last two and half or three years; but before we study the rites which mark it, let us consider the manner in which the baby is carried and his diet during this period.

1) The Ntehe.

A little child is not carried by his mother in her arms, but in a softened skin which is called *ntehe*. The preparation of the ntehe is subject to many prescribed customs:

The first of these is this: the ntehe must not be looked for before the birth of the child or it would bring misfortune. This is a taboo which I might call a "taboo of prevision". Some other taboos of this kind are met with in our tribe.

For a first-born child, the skin must be

provided by the maternal uncle. It is a rule, but this custom is not taboed (1). The father can also prepare it, if necessary.

The ntehe must not be a sheep skin. That is taboo. Let them take the skin of a duiker (blue antelope), a of goat, of a mhala (impala). Sheep skins are only employed when three or four children have died in previous years and the mother is in the state of destitution called *buwumba*. (Chap. II.)

The ntehe is arranged in such a way that the legs of the animal are used as straps, the forelegs are tied around the neck, the hindlegs around the waist and the child is in that way held well against his mother's shoulders. He can either show his head outside his ntehe or be entirely covered by it. This way of carrying babies is very convenient: mother and child get so accustomed to it that a baby, when you lift it, stretches out its legs at once at right angles with its body in order to sit on its mother's back; and the mother can easily do all her work, even till her fields with the baby on her back in its ntehe!

2) The diet during the nursing period.

The child is nursed by the mother. He is allowed to take the breast at any time. There is nothing like a diet regulation amongst natives and they would deem it a cruelty to refuse the breast to a crying child.

There are some customs relating to the *milk*. When a mother has to leave her child for a short time, she squeezes a few drops of her milk on his neck in order to prevent him feeling thirsty. When she has been absent for more than one day (it can only happen when the child is able to eat some solid food) and returns home, before nursing the child again, she heats a bit of broken pot in the fire and squeezes into it a little milk from each breast. The liquid evaporates. The reason of this custom is this: the mother's milk has grown cold; it must be warmed again; other-

(1) Though the term taboo generally means a prohibition, I take the liberty of using it in a positive sense: A custom is taboo or is taboed when its transgression is a taboo.

wise the child will be constipated. This is a taboo (1). When a baby bites the teat, it is considered as naughtiness and the mother scratches its forehead as a punishment.

Mothers not having enough milk use a kind of shrub called *neta* as a medecine. The shrub which is an Euphorbiacea contains milky sap. It is a treatment based on the principle : Similia similibus curantur.

The Thonga believe that milk alone would never suffice to make a child grow : *Nwana a kula hi miri, the child grows by medicine*, such is the adage which is universally met with. When you see a woman carrying a child on her back, you will notice hanging to the *ntehe* the reed (lihlanga) containing the black powder which protects against the dangers of the bush and a little calabash half filled with water. This water is not pure water, it is the medicine called *milombyana*. This word is the plural and diminutive form of *nombo* which means baby's ailment. There is a great *nombo*, convulsions, also called *tilo*, heaven, because this complaint is put in a mysterious relation with the influence of heaven (See Part VI). There is a small *nombo*; this is the infantile diarrhea which so often troubles the little ones; but both diseases are supposed to be caused by the *nyoka*, the intestinal parasite, the worm or snake (nyoka means both) which is in every child and must always be combated because, if unchecked, it will pass from the bowels to the stomach; it will come and beat the fontanella (2) and will finally penetrate the chest. Then the little one will turn his eyes, be seized by convulsions and die. Happily there are some drugs which have a wonderful effect on this dangerous guest ! One of my neighbours who was a convert in Rikatla gave me their names. The first is a very common Protacea (?) with large husks called the Dlanyoka, " the one

(1) Compare with the Zulu milk charms described by D. Kidd, Savage Childhood. Page 38.

(2) Tjaba-tjaba, the fontanella, plays a great part in the diagnosis of children's doctors and they often cover it with black wax. When the child hiccoughs, his mother or somebody else will blow on the fontanella to prevent vomiting. This will " make his heart stand " (yimisa mbilu).

which kills worms ". Mixed with the roots of a Leguminacea called *Nwamahlanga* and with two other plants found near the sea, it forces the worm to keep quiet. These drugs are boiled, the decoction is carefully poured into a special little pot called *hlembetwana ya milombyana* which will be kept in the hut. Every morning the mother will warm the pot a little, pour some of its contents into a shell of sala and give the child a mouthful to drink, dip her finger into the medecine, let two or three drops fall from it on the fontanella; then she spits on the lower part of the shell and presses it all along the sternum of the baby as far as the navel. This is said to " nurse the child, to make him grow ". Should he be sick, this treatment will be repeated many times a day. If he is well and goes about with his mother, she will pour the *milombyana* into the small calabash and give him a few sups from it from time to time.

The child must never drink ordinary water, but only the *milombyana* decoction. It is a taboo. Should the mother travel far from home and leave behind her the *milombyana* pot, she is allowed to add some water to the calabash, but she must always keep a little of the decoction in the calabash before doing so. The mother herself is not allowed to drink the water of another country. She must only drink water from home and, if she is forced to travel, she must take a little powder from the reed each time she drinks so that the child may become familiarised with that country (1). These laws must be kept during all the nursing period.

The child begins to eat *solid food* as soon as his teeth are cut and when he is able to take it with his own hands. But some people do not like to give it to him too soon, as they say his stools become fetid. When later on he is

(1) A similar custom is observed in the case of moving from one country to another. When a Ronga comes back from Kimberley having found a wife there, both bring with them a little of the earth of the place they are leaving and the woman must eat a little of it every day in her porridge in order to accustom herself to her new abode. This earth provides the transition between the two domiciles!

able to go outside and to take care of himself, then he can eat any ordinary food.

If the mother dies during the nursing period the little one is

THONGA CALABASHES

The smallest are used for keeping medicinal powders (tinhungubane). The next in size (minkhubi) are employed for the milombyana. Those with the long handles are the mintcheko, used as bottles or for drinking.

almost sure to follow her. The baby is fed with goat's or cow's milk; but the natives do not know that they must add water to it; then sooner or later the child dies of enteritis. I have heard of some cases in which another woman has taken charge of the child, nursed him with her own milk and weaned him successfully; her own child being older, she weaned him earlier than the usual time and nursed the other child in his place. These women were wives of the same husband at Libombo near Rikatla and the foster mother claimed compensation for her deed. Another wonderful case is the following: a woman died shortly after the birth of her boy called Mayimbule; the grandmother, by name Mishidohi, who had an adult son and had had no other child since prepared light beer and other appropriate food and succeeded in secreting milk in her own breast; so the child was saved!

3) Dentition.

As soon as the child has cut the two lower and upper incisors, the mother takes a white bead (tjambu) and ties it to one of the child's hairs above the forehead. This white bead is said to help the other teeth to come out normally. If this precaution were not taken, the child would not become intelligent; he would shiver instead of smiling; he would bring forward his lips and his tongue to prevent the air from getting into his mouth! When all the teeth are duly cut, the bead is removed and thrown away *talen*, viz. on the *tala*. The *tala* is the ash-heap, the place behind the hut on which everyone throws ashes and dirt. It plays a great part in the customs of the Thonga and other South African Bantu.

The teeth (tinyo-menyo) of the children are called figuratively *hobe*. The *hobe* (pl. *tihobe*) means the grain of pounded maize which is white and very similar to a tooth. Hence the expression: "A humi hobe", "he has got out a grain of maize», employed to indicate the cutting of the teeth.

When a child cuts his upper teeth first, it is a bad omen.

In the Northern clans and especially amongst the Ba-Pedi, it is a great taboo. At his death the child must be buried in wet soil. Amongst the Ba-Ronga the ill-omen is not considered so serious.

Later on, when the child loses his first teeth, he must not let them fall out hap-hazard anywhere. He must take the fallen tooth, go to the ash-heap, put his finger into the hole and say : "Kokwa, kokwa, ndji hwe hobe !" (Grandfather, grandfather, give me a grain of maize !) Then he throws the tooth over his shoulder on the ashes and goes home without looking backward. Should he look backward, his grandfather (the spirit of the departed ?) would not give him a new tooth. (1) This custom is no longer taboo and is disappearing.

When a younger brother cuts his teeth, they are considered as pushing away or pulling the teeth of the elder, as the younger brother comes into the world, as a rule, three years after the elder.

As regards *hair*, the first cutting is accompanied by the following custom : the mother sprinkles some drops of her milk on the forehead and on the occiput of the child ; then she cuts his hair and throws it away in the midst of thick grass. When she cuts her own hair, she always leaves a band on both sides of the head for the amusement of the child, till he is able to walk.

These rites are not considered as very important. But there are three others which are most punctiliously observed and which divide the nursing period into three subperiods : the presentation to the moon, after three months, the tying of the cotton string after one year, and the weaning ceremonies at the close of the period.

(1) Comparative Ethnography : I remember quite well that, when I was a boy, we were told in Neuchâtel that we must not let a broken tooth get lost, lest it should be found by a dog and a dog's tooth would grow in its stead !

4) The presentation to the moon (ku yandla).

The apparition of the new moon is always received with cheers by the Ba-Ronga. The first person who sees it shouts : "Kengelekezeeeee ! " and this exclamation is repeated from one village to another. *Kenge* is the descriptive adverb which means the form of the crescent of the moon. Each " moon ", or month, is considered as being a new one, the old one having died, and there were special names for each month of the year (See Part VI).

As soon as the mother of the child has resumed her menses (the menses are called tinwheti, months) and this happens as a rule on the third month after the delivery amongst Thonga women, she takes her garments, washes them, puts on new clothing and then proceeds to the ceremony of the *yandla*. The child must be "given his month". This is done in the following way. The day the new moon appears, the mother takes with her a torch or only a brand from the fire and the grandmother follows her carrying the child : both go to the ash-heap behind the hut. There the mother throws the burning stick towards the moon, the grandmother flings the child into the air saying : "This is your moon ! " (hweti ya ku hi yoleyo) : then she puts the child on the ashes. The little one cries, rolls over in the dirt on the ash-heap. Then his mother snatches him up (wutla), nurses him and they go home.

This ceremony is said to " open the chest of the child " otherwise "his ears would die", he would remain stupid. When a child is not intelligent, it is usual to say to him : You have not been shown your moon ! (1)

Therefore the *yandla* means a progress made by the child, the entrance into a new phase of his existence. The fact is emphasised by the three following changes which take place on

(1) However the name of the child's month is soon forgotten and is never afterwards recalled. This seems to show that the custom is dying out as well as the knowledge of the names of the various months.

the day of the yandla: 1) Henceforth his father is allowed to take the child in his arms. Up to that day, this was taboo, as the child being continually with his mother was perhaps polluted by the dangerous blood following the birth; but now she has washed her clothing and has been purified by the reappearance of the menses; the danger no longer exists. 2) It is now permissible to push him gently by his elbows and 3) to sing him songs to console him (khongota) when he cries. This was taboo before the presentation to the moon.

There is another custom which seems to be confounded sometimes with the yandla. It is also performed for small children and is called: *kulakulisa*. When a friend of the family passes through the village coming from afar, from Johannesburg for instance, he takes the new-born child in his arms, throws him up and says: « Kula-kula-kula, u ya tlhasa Johan ». (Grow, grow, grow and reach Johannesburg.) This is a minor custom (nau nyana); it is more or less play and is not taboed as the yandla. After the yandla, a new therapeutic agent is added to the decoction of milombyana, the *biyeketa*. *Ku biyeketa* means: "to put inside an enclosure". Twice a month during the afternoon, when the moon is new and when it is full, the family doctor goes to the kraal of the baby, he lights a fire before the door of the hut, cooks his medicines with water in a pot till they boil. Then he draws the embers to one side of the pot and lays on them a big pill, a *mhula*. The *mhula* is made of fat from an ox paunch or from a goat's paunch mixed with medicinal powder. Then he places a mat on end so as to make a small round enclosure: mother and baby enter it and he covers them with a piece of cotton cloth. They expose themselves to the steam which comes from the pot and to the smoke which emanates from the mhula. When both have copiously perspired and when the emanation has come to an end, the mother tells the doctor to uncover them and they emerge from the vapour bath. Then the doctor scarifies both of them with a razor on the forehead, on the ster-

(1) Viz. to the end of the world... These clans are far away north outside the Ronga country.

num, on the spine between the shoulders, on the elbow, on the wrist, on the knees and introduces a little of his medicinal powder into the small wounds. The pot with the hot decoction is then taken by the doctor behind the hut, the mother accompanying him. She pours a little of the water into his hands: he spits into it, uttering the sound *tsu* (which is the sacramental act in the ordinary worship) and throws it on the child. The mother rubs the whole body of the little one with it; in the meantime the doctor prays to his gods, viz. the spirits of his ancestors. Begining with the formula of invocation which doctors always use, he says: "Abusayi, akhwari! This is the child! May he grow! May he become a man by means of this medicine of mine! May his perspiration be good; may the impurity go away; may it go to Shiburi, to Nkhabelane! (1) May the child play well, be like his companions. This is not my beginning! You have given me these drugs; may they protect him against disease so that nobody may say there is no power in them, etc." After this prayer the doctor takes the little child and goes back to the central place of the village. The mother stays and washes her own body with the decoction, praying also to her gods (but without the *tsu*, as this has been uttered by the "master of the drugs").

The treatment of the biyeketa is also called "hungulo dja milombo", "the bath for infantile diseases;" it is not a curative, but a preventative; it aims at ascertaining if the child is all right. If he has bad stools (a nga tlambi psinene) the mother will perhaps remember that she has forgotten to enclose him and she will call the doctor in at once. Should he fall sick, the biyeketa will not be performed again but the milombyana administered more frequently. However it is of importance for the growth of the child. To neglect it is taboo! (1)

(1) I hear the converts generally have not abandoned the biyeketa, but they do not allow the doctor to perform the sacrificial act and to pray to the spirits. Sam Ngwetsa, the children's physician of Rikatla used to pray thus: "O Father of mercy! I pray thee! I do not pray the dead but Thee only who art in heaven! Grant us to see this child in good health, standing firm, this little lamb!"

As for the scarifications, sometimes they are followed by a second vapour bath, as if the doctor wanted to make the medicine contained in the smoke penetrate through them into the body, in which case he will only "close" them later on by introducing a healing powder into them. Children cry generally when they see the physician... They dread the pain of the scarification. When the mother goes to the doctor's village, she takes with her the wood, the mat and a pot of beer or a fowl in payment. The physician's charge for a biyeketa is six pence to one shilling or a hen or a pot of beer.

5) The tying of the cotton string.

When the child "tiyelanyana" viz. "becomes a little firm", the mother having to plough her fields and to cook the food begins to seat him on the sandy soil, after having made a kind of hole of about five inches in depth. We have seen Thonga babies sitting already at the age of two months. But this "dumping" hardly meets all the requirements and the mother looks for a girl to help her to take care of the baby (wa ku tlanga na ye, to play with him). She puts the child in the charge of an elder sister or a cousin; a girl of five to ten is quite strong enough for the purpose. I have often admired the patience of these miniature nurses, sometimes not very much bigger than the child they carry, with their very troublesome babies.

But very soon the child begins to crawl (kasa) and this is the time when a very striking rite is performed. This rite seems to be practised all over the tribe, but it has more importance in the Northern clans than amongst the Ba-Ronga. I shall here give the description of Viguet who belonged to the Tsungu clan and had emigrated to the Spelonken. My readers must forgive me if I cannot tell the story with all its details and if I am obliged to write some of them in latin. (1)

(1) A more complete description of this rite and of some others related to the taboos of the Thonga will be found in the Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie, Oct. 1910, Paris.

These are the ipsissima verba of my informant: "This is a great law amongst the Thonga. When a child begins to crawl, even before, the *puri* is tied round his waist. The *puri* is a cotton (1) string. Father and mother fix the day; if they forget to do so, their parents, (the grand-parents) will remind them of the law. They must have sexual intercourse, but in such a way that the mother will not become pregnant, s. n. i. (See Note 2). The mother will have to take in her hands "their filth" (thyaka ra bona) smear the string with it and tie it round the child. It will remain there till it falls into pieces. After that operation the child is "grown up" and three things are allowed which were taboo before:

1) The child, if he dies can be buried on the hill, in dry soil. Before the *boha puri* he would have been buried in wet soil, near the river, as it is customary with twins and children who have cut their upper teeth first.

2) It can participate in the strange purification called *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place after the death of one of the inhabitants of the village (See ceremonies of death).

3) The parents can again have conjugal intercourse though they must avoid conception till the child is weaned. Before this ceremony it was absolutely prohibited, and should they have sinned in this respect and should the mother have conceived, they would be very guilty! It is a dangerous taboo! They would have "stolen" the child, stolen it from the law (yiba nawen). The child would not have "entered the law". It would be useless to tie the string any more round him in order to repair the evil done. Should he live long, should he even become an old man, he will have to be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain would be prevented from falling.

Amongst the Maluleke and the Hlengwe such children are even burnt after their death. We shall speak later on about the mysterious relation established by the Thonga between those children, their burial and the rain.

(1) There are plants of cotton probably subspontaneous in the Low Country of the Transvaal and of Delagoa Bay.

Amongst the Ba-Ronga' this rite is called *boha nshale* (to tie the cotton) and can be performed in the same way or even more simply by the father. (See my paper already quoted in the Revue d'Ethnographie et de Sociologie). Parents, when they have duly tied the string on the little one are said to have *fuya nwana*, viz. taken possession of the child.

Amongst them again, another thing is then allowed which was taboo before : The child can be carried on the shoulders without ntehe by the arms alone (hi minkono).

It is clear that the tying of the cotton string means the official aggregation of the child into the family, even into the human society. Before that, he was hardly considered as a human being, he was *shilo* (a thing), *khuna* (an incomplete being). Now he is *nkulu*, a grown up child. (1) The expression *fuya nwana* confirms our explanation. This custom is not a protective rite : the physician has nothing to do with it ; it s really an act by which the new-born child becomes a regular member of the community. The severe interdiction of renewed conception before this rite has been accomplished is evidently dictated by the feeling that another child must not come before this one has been duly aggregated to the family.

6. The weaning.

A whole year, even more will elapse after the *boha puri* before the little one can be weaned. He will learn to speak, to walk and it is only when his intelligence is sufficiently developed to allow him to run small errands that the date of the weaning will be fixed. When his parents can send him to the next hut to ask for snuff and see him coming back holding the tobacco, they say : « Now the time has come! »

The rite of weaning is accomplished in the following manner in Nondwane. (Mboza).

(1) This word *khuna is* also employed to designate boys who have not yet gone through the circumcision school. *Bukhuna* is the despicable state of

First of all, the father looks for a young *ntjopfa* tree which has only one root. The ntjopfa is an anonacea bush, which colonists sometimes call the wild custard. (Its fruit is very much like custard fruit and it is said that the true cultivated custard can be grafted on it). The root of this tree is said to have the property of making people forget. The mother cooks a pot of Kafir corn in which she has put the medicine. This will help the child to forget the breast. But the great act is the *hondlola* which takes place under the direction of the physician. The mother pounds some mealies, pours water on them and adds some leaven; in this way she makes a little light beer (buputju). She keeps a little of the bran of the pounded mealies. The doctor comes, kills a chicken, sprinkles this bran with the blood and *hahla*, viz. offers a regular sacrifice. He prays to the spirits of his own family and asks those of the child's family to join with them in blessing the little one. The beak of the sacrificed hen, one of the claws and one of the feathers (psirungulo) will be tied together at the child's neck. A mat is spread on the ground; the child is laid on it and greazed with oil and powder brought by the physician. Then he is smeared and rubbed with the bran. The particles which fall on the mat are called *timhore*. They are gathered by the mother who makes a ball with them. In the meantime the father looks for the nest of a certain kind of large ant which is common in the bush. It lives in the earth but the opening of its hole is tolerably large. There the mother goes at sunset. She introduces the ball into the hole so that the ant will be obliged to take all the *timhore* into the nest. Then she returns home without looking behind her. It is taboo; should she transgress this rule, she would bring back disease to her child.

This rite is the ordinary *hondlola rite* which is performed in this or in a similar way at the close of any serious disease as the conclusion of the treatment with the view of taking away

uncircumcision. This state of a child before the ceremony of *boha puri* is another kind of bukhuna.

the defilement of disease. After having *hondlola*, the physician asks for the payment of his fees. For a child he will ask ten shillings or five coins of five hundred reis. (1)

This hondlola reveals to us the true conception of the nursing period held by the natives. For them these three first years of the child's life are a period of disease. So many perils threaten the little one's well-being that he can hardly be considered healthy. He is during the whole time under the supervision of the physician who takes leave of the little patient on the day of weaning.

This view of infancy accounts also for some other taboos. It is *yila* for instance to say of a child who is particularly fat : Wa tika, he is heavy : this would bring mishap to him. One must say : A kota ribye, he is like a stone ! It is taboo also in Shiluvane to make use before a child of the word *mfene*, baboon. There is a disease which is called by that name and it would befall him. One must say : the thing which inhabits the hills, and so on...

The very day of his weaning, the child must leave the village of his parents and go to stay with his grand-parents. A little mat, a few clothes have been prepared for him and the grand-mother comes to take him. If he is a first born, he must go to the parents of the mother; the second one will be received by the parents of the father. Sometimes father and mother accompany their offspring themselves, during the night, to facilitate the separation. It is a sad day for them as well as for the child ! The following day the parents go again to see how the little one has withstood their absence. They do not enter the village... They remain hidden in the little copse and look at their child through the branches ! He must not see his mother, otherwise he would cry... Touching scene indeed !

Should the weaned child be obliged to stay with his parents,

(1) In the Mpfumu clan the rite of weaning is somewhat different. I have publsihed in „Les Ba-Ronga" a description of it given by Tobane. It seems that the element of the cotton string rite and of the broken pot rite are mixed with the proper weaning rite. I think that the description of Mboza is more trustworthy.

the mother will smear her breast with Jamaica pepper (biribiri) so that he may lose taste for the maternal milk as quickly as possible.

The act of weaning is called *lumula*. It comes from the verb *luma* to bite, followed by the reversive suffix *ula* which means to take away, to undo (like *un* in undo). The mother as well as the child are said to have *lumuka* viz. to be in the state when weaning has been accomplished. This word is pronounced with a curious smile because the act of weaning is in direct relation with the sexual life. As we have seen, sexual intercourse is absolutely prohibited before the tying of the cotton string, viz. for one year after the birth. Afterwards it is allowed but the mother must not conceive another child before she has weaned the one she is nursing. The law is even more stringent : she must not conceive before her milk has entirely passed away (phya mabelen), after the weaning ceremony, because if she became pregnant, that would "cross the way of the weaned child" (tjemakanya nwana), "cut his road" (tjemela), "go beforehand" (rangela); he would become thin, paralysed, with big holes below the shoulders. He must first be firm (tiyela), then a new pregnancy will not be able to cause him to suffer from dysentery or other ailments!

Often parents do not observe this very hard law! If they see that conception has taken place before the child is weaned, they will hasten the ceremony. But they will be severely judged by the old people. Should the little one be sick, the husband will be scolded by the parents of the mother. They will say : "A djambeli nwana", he has caused damage to the child! If a man forces his wife to transgress the law, she will run during the night to the hut of the father of her husband to tell him. In fact this is a very rare occurence. Children follow each other regularly at an interval of two and a half or three years and seldom is the law transgressed which says : A mother must nurse her child during three "hoes", viz. three ploughing seasons.

CONCLUSION ON THE RITES OF INFANCY

The rule that a mother "must plough for her child three hoes" is excellent. It is no doubt a splendid preparation for the future life to have been fed during three years on mother's milk. Will it be possible to maintain that law under the new conditions of civilized life which are adopted more and more all through the tribes? Let us remark that this provision, though it has been inspired partly by the interest for the child itself, is dictated mainly by a superstition concerning the lochia secretion which is regarded as highly noxious and keeps the mother in an unclean state for a long time. This superstition will not withstand the test of science and will pass away. On the other hand, polygamy has been invented and is flourishing partly on account of this law. A husband being separated from the wife who is nursing a child will have other women at his disposal. Polygamy is doomed to pass also. For both these reasons, it is to be feared that this healthy custom will not be maintained in the future. It is a pity and we ought to do our best to encourage its continuance.

Many young married natives leave their homes and go to Johannesburg to the mines and stay there for one or two years as soon as they see their wife pregnant. This is certainly on account of the above rule; but this desertion of the conjugal home is hardly to be approved.

As regards the whole medical treatment which characterises this period which is more or less considered as a disease, it has no value at all. The big intestinal worm is, of course, merely a product of native imagination. Children sometimes suffer from lombrics, but not more than white children. Convulsions are frequent as a result of malaria and dysentery, and neither the ever present *milombyana* nor the bi-monthly *biyeketa* nor the powder of the reed can do anything to prevent them. The habit of always carrying water in the calabash and of never emptying it entirely is harmful. Dr Garin, our medical missionary, examined some of these milombyana calabashes with the microscope and found them full of bacteria of all kinds. It is a splendid *milieu de culture* for them. However this milombyana custom is hard to eradicate as this principle is deeply rooted in the Thonga mind: "The child grows by means of medicine" and even Christian converts respect it. They will relinquish it when some clearer notion of medical

science has entered their heads — a time which is still remote, I fear!

From the missionary point of view, let us remark the analogy between the rite of the broken pot and Christian baptism as administered to children by most of the churches. Natives readily admit a ceremony of benediction for the little ones, be it proper baptism or presentation with imposition of hands. But the heathen baptism is a baptism of smoke... and not of water — and it is in relation with mere external dangers while the Christian rite represents the purification of the soul from its sin and the new and pure life. Whatever may be the difference between the two customs, we can find in the animistic rite a point of analogy which can help us in the explanation of the spiritual sacrament and of its deep significance.

B. CHILDHOOD

The infant, shiputja (Ro.) shihlangi (Dj.) is on the way to become a boy, mufana. During the first years of this period which extends from the third to the fourteenth year, he stays with his grand-parents. They do not give him much "education". He grows at Mother Nature's good pleasure... And as Nature is not always synonimous with morality, he sometimes commits bad actions. Sometimes also, fearing chastisement for a particularly wicked deed, he flees from the kraal of the grand-parents and goes home where the paternal hand will hold him a little more firmly. But the father does not bother much with these little boys and they enjoy an immense amount of liberty. These years are perhaps the happiest of their whole life. They spend their time in the following occupations: herding the goats, stealing, catching game, learning the science of the velt, playing.

1) Herding the goats.

Just as the Kaffir corn is the old Thonga cereal which is used alone in the rites, so the goat is the domestic animal par excel-

lence, no doubt the first which the tribe knew and that which is always employed in the sacrifices. Goats are very common; everybody possesses one or two. They are kept together in one of the villages and the sons of the master of the village or of the other proprietors must tend them. They stay with the goats (tjhama timbutin) till their tenth or eleventh year and

BOYS HERDING GOATS ON THE SHILUVANE PLAIN

(In the background, the Mamotswiri mountain).

afterwards they are promoted to the care of the oxen, supposing there are oxen in the village.

The young goatherds having hardly anything on — a meagre belt of tails or bits of skin hanging from their loins... sometimes only in front, nothing behind... go to the velt playing on their little trumpets, made of a bone or a reed. They pass in the neighbourhood of the gardens. The goats look with one eye at the green mealies, the fresh leaves of

the sweet potatoes which are not protected by stone walls (there is hardly a stone all over the Thonga country) nor by barbed wire fences. But the boys are on the watch and « cut the road » from the goats (tjemetela) to keep them away from the gardens. They safely reach the little plain where nothing but hard Gramineae grow. There the boys begin to play having handed over the charge of the goats to the youngest of the party. The little chap gets tired of watching ; little by little the whole herd goes back to the prohibited garden and eats with avidity the savoury mealies stems ! After a while, the boys discover that the goats are away. They run after them, bring them back. But the mistress of the garden passes near by, coming back from the well with her pitcher on her head. She sees the harm done, inspects the traces of the goats, knows by them which herd has plundered her field, uproots some of the spoiled stems and with great clamour goes to the village of the guilty boys and throws down the mealies right before the hut of the father. No compensation is claimed in such a case, generally, but the father will thrash the boys when they come back; or should there be recurrence of the offence, the husband of the owner of the garden will himself administer a correction to the careless goatherds.

Boys herding the goats have certain customs. When one of them emits a certain incongruous noise from the rectum, the others say to him: "Fakisa!" He must answer: "Cita munya-kanya goben." (I have let out my wind by the rectum). This formula, which is Zulu, is secret. If he does not know it, they beat him and make him look after the goats till the end of the day. Should another boy reveal the answer to the uninitiated, they will punish him in the-same way.

2) Stealing.

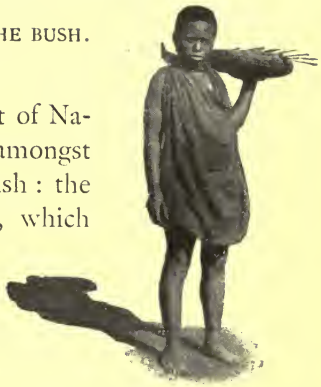
What were they doing when the goats escaped ? They had probably themselves succeeded in stealing some sweet potatoes and were roasting them on a little fire, well hidden in the

velt. Or they had discovered in the bush a broken pot, an old mortar perforated, out of use, which some one had placed there to attract bees. And indeed there was honey inside. They had stolen it... Goatherds are regular thieves and known as such. The penalty in this as in the preceeding case is a good whipping without fine. " Psa batjongwana ! It is an action of little boys ! " These minor thefts are not considered serious.

3) Catching game.

Hunger always keeps company with these boys who do not find enough to eat at home. Truly they ate to their heart's content (shura) yesterday evening, but this morning they had only a very scanty breakfast (fihluta). They try to satisfy their never satisfied appetite by catching game : not big game of course, as they have no real weapons, but birds, field-mice, eggs in the nests (the less fresh they are, the better, because there is more meat inside !) etc. To get birds they throw their sticks at them and are very clever at killing a partridge rising heavily from the grass; or they make traps with a flexible stick to which they tie a string with a bait. They bend the stick, set the trap by means of a little bit of wood and when the bird puts its beak into the bait, it is caught round the neck by the string. On the borders of the lake of Rikatla, boys used to catch even big birds with these traps. They lay many kinds of snares. One is a cage made of sticks of palm marrows which shuts automatically when a bird enters and eats the grain by which it has been attracted. They sometimes build two walls of sticks planted into the soil which converge to the same point where they reach a little door provided with the trap. Hares are sometimes caught in this way. They follow the wall and when they go through the door, they tread on a hurdle which communicates with a bent rod : the rod springs back and the hare is caught.

4) Learning the science of the bush.



Phot. G. Liengme.
A Thonga boy.

This life in the velt, always in the midst of Nature, develops the power of observation amongst boys. They know everything in the bush : the big Psyche caterpillar (Eumeta cervina), which hangs from the nembe-nembe shrub (Cassia petersiana) like a little bundle of sticks and which they call *mahambanindlwane*, "the one which walks with his house"; the big Carabid beetle which appears with the first rain, the Anthia alveolata, marked with large hollows on the elytra and which is therefore named " the son of the small pox ". Indeed I found in Rikatla a boy who knew that a certain white cocoon found on the branches of the nkanye tree (Scleryocarpa caffra) gives birth to the splendid green Queen Moth (Tropaea Mimosae). Having collected beetles and butterflies extensively for years, I have had the opportunity of recognizing the power of observation of these boys who were my best hunters ! Of course they particularly appreciate things edible... especially the *shitambela*, a big Bupresta beetle which they roast and suck.

Learning, as they do, the native names of all these creatures and their habits, they certainly acquire a great amount of knowledge during these years.

5) Playing.

Sometimes the weather is bad; it rains or it is dreadfully hot. Then the goatherd suffers and his elder brother comfortably sitting in the hut trills this song :

> Far away, there where he is, he weeps, the little boy,
> The keeper of the goats and of the calves !

But the bad days are rare and the boys play more than they cry !

The *games* of the Thonga are very numerous and are played either during the day or in the evening, especially when the moon shines. I shall here only take into consideration the boys' games, the girls' later on.

Ngulube yi da mimphobo. (The pig eats mealie cobs). One child plays the part of the pig; crawling along, covered with a mortar and a piece of cloth, he goes from one hut to another followed by the throng of his friends who clap their hands and sing the foregoing words. People give food to the pig. It is received by its friends. When they have visited all the yards, they assemble on the central place of the village and eat the food together. Sometimes the pig suddenly turns back and attacks his followers who flee in terror.

The game of *nsema*. It is a disk of woven grass made by boys. They pick up sides. The nsema is set rolling by the one and the opponents must run towards it and pierce it with their sticks before it falls to the ground. It is not allowable to touch it when it has fallen (yi holile). This game goes on till the disk is quite spoilt (yi bolile). Then the two sides rush upon each other and exchange a sound cudgelling, after which they all go and bathe in the nearest pool without any ill-feeling.

There is another game played with this disk, the game of the *ndlopfa-ndlopfana* (that is to say "the little elephant"). A boy makes a nsema, ties it to a string made of the fibres of certain palm-trees and hides. His comrades try to pierce his grass disk. But he watches. He has the right to chase them and to beat them with his stick. If the opponent succeeds in piercing the disk, in pulling it and tearing it from the string, ndlopfa-ndlopfana is vanquished.

The game of *homane* is very similar to the English hockey. The fruit of a palm tree, which is round and very hard, is used as a ball and hit with a stick into the opposite camp. If the *homane* falls between the two camps, the players rush upon it and, with their sticks, try to send it into their opponents' quarters.

In another boys' game, the *tlhuba holwane* which is played mostly by moon light, they also take two sides. A stick is planted by the one side in the earth and a piece of charcoal placed upon it. One of the opponents comes, hopping like a frog, takes out the stick and still hopping goes and plants it in his own ground. If he reaches the goal without falling, he has won. An opponent will take his turn, pull out (tlhuba) the stick and bring it back to his partners. Evidently the Ronga children find this comical!

The game of the *beetle* (shifufunu) is played as follows: one child is the beetle, and, as a distinguishing mark, he puts a handkerchief round his head. A hole is dug in the sand; he enters it, nestles in it as do some insects until quite covered with earth. He remains there perfectly still whilst his comrades sing to him the following song:

Beetle of mine...
I will marry thee... } Say " yes " to your brother.
For the price of an ox...

There is another game of the same kind : *the honey pitcher is stirred* (mbita ya bulombe ya reka-reka). The children in two rows face each other and clasp hands. One of them lays himself on their arms, and all swing him singing the same song.

The boys also play the game of *the man with the huge back who could not get out* (shikulukukwana sha ku ka buhumo). They form a circle, one standing in the centre. He hunches his back and rushes forward, head foremost, trying to break the circle and to get out either between their legs or otherwise. If he does not succeed they give him this long and comical name: shikulukukwana sha ku ka buhumo.

Quite a number of little melodies are sung by children to certain animals. When we came back in the evening to the plain of Rikatla with our waggon drawn by oxen, all the goatherds used to meet us and to accompany us a long stretch of the road shouting in honour of the oxen : « Gweymanaô, Gweyma-

naô (1) » ! Girls joined in the demonstration, pointing out the strange machine to the babies carried on their shoulders (2).

Nkwama wa ku. (Your purse)... When they eat green mealies, one of the older goatherds gives to another some of the leaves covering the cob and tells him to go and throw them away. He refuses to do so. Then the elder one collects all these leaves, rolls them up in a ball and throws them to the boy who refused, saying to him : " Your purse". The boy answers : "It is not mine ! " They all run away. He picks up the ball and tries to throw it to another saying the same thing. Should he miss him, they will mock him and say : " You are not a man, you are but a little boy ! "

Shifufunu sha paripari. It is a kind of big Tenebrionida beetle which beats the ground with its abdomen (Psammodes Bertoloni). Groups of children, boys together or girls together, play two by two. One of the two lies down facing the ground and the other sits on his back, looking forward, to ward the head of the one who is prone. He sings while beating the other's back : "Shifufunu sha paripari ndjuluka hi yetlele!... Beetle turn up that we may lie down ! " At once all the children who were sitting throw themselves down and the ones who were lying down sit on their backs, and so on...

To develop their courage, boys have another more dangerous game ; it is *the war on the wasps* (mipfi). In their country there are big nasty yellow-brown hornets (a kind of Belonogaster) which build more or less circular nests attaining sometimes the size of a man's head. On a certain day the boys decide to make war on these enemies. They make shields with leaves of the *nala* palm tree which they plait together.

They cut down branches which they wave to protect themselves and one of them goes and strikes a heavy blow on the wasp's nest ! The irritated insects rush on their assailants and sting them. The boys try to kill the wasps with their sticks or

(1) See for the tunes of these and other songs " Les Chants et les Contes des Ba-Ronga " page 34 to 64.

(2) It is customary to show to babies extraordinary and fearful sights, a white man passing, for instance, in order to " open their minds. "

to crush them when they light on them. Sometimes, overcome by the pain, they run away; sometimes, resisting to the last, they kill and exterminate their winged enemies.

Besides this there are also *big battles between the shepherds* of the different flocks. The shepherds amuse themselves by taking one another's cattle. Those who are the strongest bring the stolen herd triumphantly back to the neighbourhood of their village, but they would never let it enter the kraal. The vanquished call to their help their elder brothers who come to recover their property and, if they can, give the thieves a sound thrashing!

Insults and fights are frequent between the clans. The boys of Mpfumu call out to those of Matolo : " Forest gadders ! Eaters of snails and boas, of lizards and tortoises" (all of which are doubtful meats !) (In Ronga : Balala ! badi ba tihumba ni tinhlaru ni makhwahle ni tinfutchu). Those of Matolo answer them : " Crowd of women that you are, clad in cotton material !" (Babasati ! matchimbamphela !), in reference to the fact that the inhabitants of Mpfumu, living near town, some time ago replaced the belt of skins worn by the savages by a piece of cotton tied to the waist and hanging down to the knee (ladula).

The custom of frightening children with imaginary beasts is wide spread amongst Thonga. The black man is called *Shingomu-Ngomu* or else *Shikunkununu* and by this very expressive vocable they designate a mighty and huge being who walks, balancing his big body from right to left with a sound like *ngomu-ngomu*. The ogre is *Shitukulumukumba* a word originally from the Zulus and which corresponds to the Ronga *Nuambilutimhokora* that is to say: "the one who has scales on the heart." He eats human beings. These imaginary creatures play a large part in the native tales, especially the one who " has scales on the heart ". He feeds on vermin, lice and big white beetle larvae which are his almonds. (1)

When a child cries and cannot be comforted, somebody goes and hides behind the hut and slaps his neck saying: " U-u-u

(1) We shall give complete ogre tales in Part V.

while those remaining with the aggrieved little one say to him: "Be quiet, listen ! Shikukununu is coming ! "

There are also the *timbelembele,* a kind of terrible wasp which only exists in the imagination of children. When a boy does not dare to follow his companions up a tree on which they have climbed, they shout to him : " Make haste ! Here are the

BOYS TRYING TO PLAY BILLIARDS

at Magudju's, near Antioka Station.

timbelembele coming to bite you ! " And he is so frightened that he at once finds strength to climb.

Thonga boys are so fond of games that they even try to imitate those of the Europeans. In the adjoining illustration, you see them disposed in two rows throwing some projectiles on the ground. I wondered what game this was and was informed that these boys, having seen Portuguese officials playing billiards at the camp, attempted to do the same and this was the result!

C. THE AGE OF PUBERTY

I. *Circumcision rites.*

1) Spread and origin of circumcision amongst the Thonga.

As he grows up, the Thonga boy leaves the flock of goats and is entrusted with the care of the big cattle, oxen and cows, when his father owns any. He becomes very proud and tyrannises over his younger brothers ; he calls himself their "hosi", their chief and sends them to work for him ; in Maputu, big boys went so far as to scorn water brought from the pool by women and only to use water specially fetched by small boys. If they grow so important in their own eyes, the reason is that some special rites are performed on them during this period, rites which are calculated to give them great self-confidence. Amongst these rites, some have a direct relation with the sexual life and some represent only the accession to virility. Let us begin with a study of the circumcision, then we shall take the other puberty rites and the habit of *gangisa*.

In a great many Bantu tribes, the age of puberty is marked by ceremonies of initiation often accompanied by circumcision. There is little doubt that circumcision was practised all through the Thonga tribes in former times. It is still current with those Thonga who emigrated into the Transvaal and this is not a custom borrowed from the Pedi clans which have all preserved circumcision. Though the Thonga often receive the initiation in Pedi schools, in the Spelonken, they possess their own schools for the Nkuna near Leydsdorp. They have a special word for the physical operation, *yimba*, (in Ronga *soka*) which is used together with *ngoma* (Suto *goma*), the general name of all the customs connected with it.

Amongst the Ba-Ronga, circumcision was abandoned more than a hundred years ago, before the arrival of Manukosi, and they were called *Ba-butoya*, the cowards, by other Northern clans who said they feared the sufferings of that cruel school. Mboza has seen some old Ronga men who had been circumcised probably at the begining of the XIX^{tt} Century. It is well known that somewhat later Chaka stopped the custom amongst the Zulu ; it did not fit in with the new military system inaugurated by him. When the Ngoni general Manukosi invaded the plains of the Low Country, no wonder circumcision disappeared in those clans also. The constant fighting which prevailed in those troubled times did not allow men to stay three consecutive months in a circumcision lodge. It was feared also that circumcised boys would be killed by the ennemy, being unable to run away in case of an invasion. But old men in the Bilen country assert that the *Ngoma* is a very old custom of the Thonga and that it has long been practised by all their clans.

Is it possible to ascertain its *true origin ?* My informants, Viguet especially, were convinced that the Ngoma was brought to the tribes of the Northern Transvaal by the *Balemba* and it is a historical fact that, as regards the Ba-Venda of that country, the rite was adopted quite recently under the influence of the Malemba or Balemba. These Balemba are a very curious people living amongst the Thonga and the Suto of the Zoutpansberg, just as the Jews amongst European nations, without chief, without national unity, but with characteristic customs to which they adhere from generation to generation... They resemble the Jews in the fact that they do not eat flesh unless all the blood has been first carefully drained away. They dread eating blood more than anything else and they shave at each new moon. They brought with them the metallurgic art and introduced domestic fowls into the country. All these facts tend to show that they have had intimate relations with Semitic populations and they themselves declare to have come from the North by sea and reached the coast after shipwreck. Now they practise circumcision with great assiduity and hold a spe-

cial position in the lodges of the Spelonken. They are called there the masters of the Ngoma. (1) Circumcision is wide-spread amongst Semitic nations and one might be tempted to infer from these remarks that the custom has been taught the Bantu by Semitic masters. It is certainly true as regards the Ba-Venda in the Spelonken. (2)

In South Africa the ngoma is much older than the arrival of the Balemba (which can be fixed some time during the XVIIIth century). That which has happened in Spelonken, through the agency of the Balemba during the XIXth century, may have taken place at some earlier date for other South African tribes and the Semitic origin of the Ngoma is quite possible, though there is no proof at present extant.

2) General characteristics of the circumcision rites.

I am treating here of the rites as they are met with amongst the Thonga of Spelonken especially ; my informants on this point have been the old Viguet, who was initiated some 50 years ago, and Valdo, a much younger man, who went through the rites 20 years ago ; both are from Spelonken. There Thonga and Bvesha (Suto) candidates enter the same lodges. A boy named Pikinini revealed to me the secret formulae as they are recited amongst the Nkuna (Leydsdorp). The rites certainly vary amongst the tribes, but there is a general resemblance between them all.

I was never fortunate enough to penetrate into a lodge, as it is a great taboo. I tried once to obtain admittance... in vain, near Shiluvane. But the rites have been described to

(1) I note in a paper by the Rev. Norton about puberty rites of the Basuto (S. A. Journal of Science, March 1910) that, if a Bushman is in a lodge, he takes precedence amongst the Suto and that there circumcision is derived from the Bushmen just as it is from the Malemba in the Zoutpansberg.

(2) See my paper on the " Balemba of the Zoutpansberg " Folklore, Sept. 1908 and also "Zidji ", my South-African novel. Chap. II. (Saint-Blaise, Foyer Solidariste).

me with such a wealth of details that I seemed to have lived for three months with the candidates !

A French anthropologist, Mr A van Gennep, has published lately a book on " Les Rites de Passage " (Paris. Nourry 1909) which throws very much light on these mysterious customs. He shows that a great number of rites have been inspired by the idea of passage from one place to another, and that all the rites belonging to this category present the same general features : in the first place the separation from the old state of things is symbolised by certain rites which he calls separation rites ; then begins a period of margin, where the individual or the group concerned is secluded from society and submitted to a number of taboos or rites ; thirdly, at the close of this period, the persons who have been tabooed are again received into the community as regular members by the aggregation rites. This schematism applies perfectly to the Circumcision rites which are a Rite of Passage par excellence, and I shall try now to explain them briefly in their natural sequence. For more details see *Zidji*, a South African novel which I have published in 1910 (Foyer solidariste, Saint-Blaise Switzerland) and where a more elaborate description will be found.

3) The three series of rites of the circumcision.

a) Separation rites.

The circumcision school (Ngoma) is held every fourth or fifth year and all the boys from ten to sixteen years are sent to it by their parents. Some may escape, but if they happen to be at hand on the next occasion, they will be incorporated by consent or by force. Even an adult member of the tribe can be compelled to go through the initiation, if he is found in the country being uncircumcised. The *time of the year* chosen for the opening of the school is a month during which the morning star appears, in winter. *Ngongomela*, Venus, is the herald of the day. She precedes the sun, so she must lead the boys to their new life, from darkness to the light ! (Valdo)

One day all the candidates are gathered in the capital : this school is the business of the chief and has been arranged by the council of the headmen (tinduna) over which he presides ; he has the supervision of it and will receive the fees from the initiated later on. Boys circumcised four years ago must also attend the whole school as shepherds (barisi, psitjiba), namely as servants of the men and watchers over the candidates. They have already partly built the lodge outside the village, in a remote place, not too far however, because the women must bring each day food for all the inmates of the " yard of mysteries ".

After having slept in the capital, early in the morning, when Ngongomela rises in the East, the band of the uncircumcised *goes out* from the inhabited world to the wilderness, to the lodge. This is the first separation rite. And here is the second : they find on the road a fire made of very scented wood ; when they smell the smoke, they must jump over it. This rite is called : Tlula ritsa, to jump over the firebrand.

Later on when still at some distance from the newly built lodge, they hear a great noise, a song accompanied with the beating of drums and blowing of antelope horns. They must not understand the meaning of the words which are sung by the host of shepherds and the men, as it would frighten them too much :

The little boy cries ! bird of the winter !

Here they are stopped. Eight of them are chosen and told to go forward. Each one is given an assagai and they are pushed between the singers who hold sticks and are facing each other in two rows leaving a passage between them. They thus run the gauntlet and receive a good whipping ; (the flagellation is often also a separation rite) ; having gone through this unexpected experience they are caught at the other end by four men and deprived of all their clothing. Their hair is also cut, (they must evidently sever from all their past), and they are brought to eight stones and seated on them. These eight stones are not

far from the entrance of the yard, in a spot called " the place of the crocodile ". Opposite them are eight other stones on which eight men are sitting. These men are called *Nyahambe*, the Lion-men. They have a fearful appearance, their heads being covered with lion's manes. As soon as the boy is seated on the stone facing the Lion-man, he receives a severe blow from behind : he turns his head to see who struck him and sees one of the shepherds laughing at him. The operator seizes his opportunity. While the attention of the boy is diverted, he seizes the foreskin and cuts it in two movements : first the upper part (this is quickly done and does not cause very much pain), secondly the lower part and the string, a longer and much more painful operation. The surgeons now use an ordinary European knife ; formerly they had only native made knives. Often the boy falls down unconscious ; then they throw a jar of cold water over him. All the circumcised receive rings of woven, very soft grass which they put on their wound, tying them round the loins with a string. Formerly they did not anoint the sore with medicine : boys used only to drink a decoction which is said to stop hemorrhage ; now they use paraffin externally.

The boy has *crossed* (*wela*, like a boat across a river), a technical expression which shows clearly the character of this rite of passage. He is introduced into the lodge.

The ablation of the foreskin, though it cannot have the high spiritual meaning of the Jewish circumcision, seems to me also distinctly a separation rite, this part of the body representing the ancient despicable childish life from which the initiated emerges to-day.

b) Marginal rites.

The newly circumcised boy is now to be three months secluded from society in the " yard of mysteries " called *sungi*. Let us first describe this lodge and we shall see what his occupations will be during this time of trial.

I. *The Sungi.*

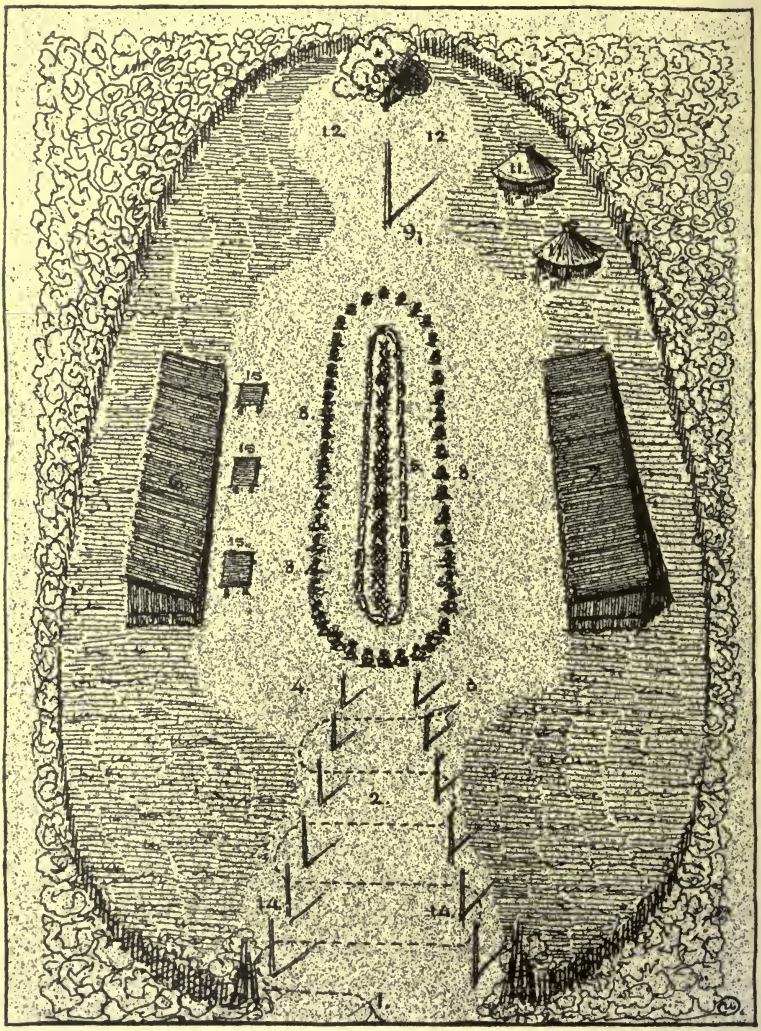
(See the adjoining schematic drawing of the lodge).

The whole sungi is surrounded by a high fence of thorny branches. This is a sign that all that goes on inside must be kept secret. No one who is not initiated can be allowed to see it, especially women. This fence is prolonged at the entrance so as to make a long avenue by which one penetrates into the yard. Then the way of access continues between twelve poles arranged in pairs (2). The inmates alone have the right to follow the road between the poles. Circumcised visitors (uncircumcised would not be admitted) turn round them and cross the road five times so as to reach the men's entrance at the end (3), and not the candidate's gate, which is on the opposite side (4). Further on is the central court of the sungi with the long fireplace built with stones and called the Elephant (5) round which the boys must sit (8), warming their right hip at the fire. The uterine nephew of the chief, the son of his sister, who takes precedence in all the rites, who is the first to be circumcised, sits on a special stone and the others behind him. He is called the *Hwatye.* Near the fireside are the tables made of hurdles of reeds on which the porridge of the boys is served every day (15). The central court is occupied on both sides by two square sheds hastily and roughly built, the one on the right (7) being the hut of the shepherds and of the men, the one on the left (6) the hut of the circumcised. The soil is not smeared in those houses. Some men also sleep in separate huts behind (11). It is behind the Elephant that the big Mulagaru pole will be raised at the close of the school (9). Further at the back of the sungi is the place of the formulae where the boys are taught (12). A tree sometimes grows in the middle and the instructor climbs on it to impart his teaching (10)!

I have drawn this schematic representation of the sungi with the help of Viguet. Having never seen it with my own eyes, I cannot guarantee that it does not omit many details... But it is correct as a whole.

The inmates of the lodge are of three categories: 1. the

" bukwera " viz. the troop of the candidates who are to be initiated ; 2. the shepherds (barisi or psitjiba, the boys who light (tjibela) the fire of the elephant) who waken the circumcised in the morning, accompany them on their hunting trips,



Drawn by J. Wavre

Schematic drawing of the circumcision lodge.

watch them when they eat, etc. 3. The grown up men who have volunteered to come and stay during the whole school in the sungi. They eat the flesh of the animals killed by the bukwera, carve pestles, weave baskets, enjoy themselves and form the council which looks after the well-being of the school. Amongst them are the so called father and mother of the Ngoma, two men who are specially in charge of the school. The " father " has a difficult task. He must keep discipline, administer punishment, etc. These two men are paid, as are the Lion-men and the Manyabe. The Manyabe is the great doctor of the school. He has poured his charms on the fence to protect the lodge against wizards. He does not stay in the sungi but can be called at any time to administer medicine to the boys who are unwell or whose wounds do not heal properly.

II. *The sexual and language taboos of the sungi.*

The whole sungi is taboo to every uninitiated person especially to women. A woman who has seen the " shond o ", viz. the leaves which the circumcised put over their wound and which form their only clothing, must be killed. But taboos are plentiful for everybody. The sexual ones are most noteworthy. Sexual intercourse is strongly prohibited to all inmates, men as well as shepherds; breaking this law would kill the circumcised. Therefore the men must not go home, at least as seldom as possible, during these three months. Married people in the village may have sexual relations; but let there be no noise, no quarrels between jealous co-wives; because, if they insult each other and if this is known in the sungi, the shepherds will come one evening and plunder that village. Strange to say, in the meantime obscene language is permitted and even recommended — a contrast which we shall often meet with during the marginal periods. Some of the formulae contain expressions which are taboo at other times; when the women bring the food to the sungi, the shepherds who receive it from their hands are allowed to address them with as many unchaste words as they like. The mothers themselves have the

right of singing obscene songs when they pound the mealies for the sungi.

As regards language there are also special expressions used during the school which are either archaic or foreign ; for instance, all the orders are given in a tongue which is neither Thonga nor Suto : Tshai goma, Go to the table ; Thari, Eat ; Khedi, Smear with white clay, etc. Often actions are not designated by the ordinary word but by extraordinary terms. For instance, the daily smearing of the bodies with clay is called : " to eat sheep's fat ". To put on the leaves of the shondlo is " to eat sheep's flesh ". To be beaten with the mbuti sticks is " to drink goat's milk ". Evidently the aim of this terminology is to increase the impression of mystery which the rites must convey to the uninitiated.

As regards the rites of the marginal period, they are calculated to give the candidates the impression that they are new men, and that they must prove it in submitting manfully to all the trials of this hard and sometimes cruel initiation.

Every morning they smear their bodies with white clay. They are shining. They have abandoned the darkness of childhood. When they have eaten their food they must pick up the crumbs which fall on the ground and throw them away in the pit near the fence, shouting some name in disdain, in an insulting manner, the name of an uncircumcised, of a *shuburu* (a term of disdain applied to boys before they pass through the school). This makes them realise their new position.

But the Ngoma " is the shield of buffalo's hide ! It is the crocodile which bites ! " The candidates must accept all the hardships of the initiation. They are taught to suffer.

III. *The trials.*

There are six main trials : blows, cold, thirst, unsavoury food, punishment, death.

Blows. On the lightest pretext, they are severely beaten by the shepherds at the order of the men of the sungi. Every day they must sit round the Elephant and, holding a stick in

Phot. H. Gros, Dance of the shepherds and men of the Circumcision school. (Spelonken, 1886.)

their hands, lunge at it as if piercing it for more that an hour. They sing the following words .

Elephant keep still !

Men and shepherds dance round them singing :

The black cow kicks ! It kicks against the jug of the baboon !

They themselves represent the black cow which the boys try to milk and they kick the boys ! In fact during this daily exercise round the Elephant — a rite which is considered as one of the most important of the Ngoma —, they beat the naked shoulders of the initiated as much as they like, not so as to bruise them however, but quite enough to cause them pain.

When the boys do not eat quickly enough, they are beaten. Sometimes they are sent to catch certain birds of the size of sparrows which they must wrap in leaves tying them in such a clever way that the men will be unable to untie them. Should one of the men succeed in undoing the knots, the boy will get a good thrashing during the meal, and so on.

The unhappy boys who are ill and cannot take part in the hunting trips must be on their guard : when their comrades come back, much excited, they fall upon them with sticks and are allowed to beat them for not having come to help them.

Cold. The months of June to August are the coldest of the South-African winter and, during the night, the temperature falls to 41 Fah., even lower. Boys lie naked in their shed, heads turned towards the central court, and suffer bitterly from the cold. They are allowed to light fires in the court, but not near their feet and it is said that one of the greatest trials of the Ngoma is this: the head is warm and the feet cold. Moreover they must always lie on their backs. Shepherds watch during the night and beat them if they lie on the side. No blanket is allowed, only light grass covers. The soil, not being smeared, swarms with a kind of white worm which bite severely during the night. Ashes are poured on the ground to kill them but

this is of but little use. In certain lodges, when there is a pool in the neighbourhood, boys are led early in the morning into the water and must remain in it a long time till the sun appears. The shepherds prevent them coming out. This is also said to help the wound to heal. (Valdo).

Thirst. It is absolutely prohibited to drink a drop of water during the whole initiation, and this taboo is said to be very painful. Boys sometimes succeed, during their hunting trips, in enticing their shepherds in one direction and in the meantime some of them escape and go to the river to drink. They will be severely punished if caught !

Unsavoury food. The law is that women, the mothers of the circumcised, must bring plenty of porridge, twice as much as is required for the boys. Should one of them fail to do it, she will be punished at a given time. They deposit their pots at some distance, so that they cannot catch any glimpse of the Ngoma, and shout : " Ha tsoo ! We are burning ". They mean : " Our heads are sore from having carried our pots such a long way. " Shepherds run to meet them and answer with any amount of jokes of rather dubious taste : " We know what is burning with you, etc. " Is it not the rule of the Ngoma ? The shepherds bring back with them the empty pots of yesterday which the women take back to their homes. Should one of them have provided too little food, her pot will be filled with long grass and when she goes home with her comrades, they will make fun of her. If she does not learn to do better, the " mother of the Ngoma " will organise a punitive expedition in her village, kill goats and fowls and thus make her obey.

All the food is placed on the reed tables and must be eaten by the boys without any seasoning. Should the tender mothers have brought some ground nut sauce, it will be confiscated and eaten by the men. When hearing the order : " Tshai goma ", the candidates must rush to the tables, kneel down, and, at the word " Thari ", seize the food with both hands and swallow it as quickly as possible. If they delay, they are beaten by the shepherds who superintend the meal. When one batch of boys have finished, they must rush to another table where other boys are still

struggling with their heap of porridge and help them to finish their portions. Owing to this emulation, the meal does not last long. Sometimes, when game has been plentiful, one of the men comes and squeezes the half digested grass found in the bowels of an antelope over the porridge, saying to the boys : " You must have something of the results of your hunting too ! "

This diet nauseates them at first. They sometimes vomit right on the table. Never mind! Every particle of the porridge must be eaten all the same. When they are accustomed to the diet, they grow fat, and it is wonderful how their physical appearance sometimes improves during the few months.

Punishments. Blows are punishments for minor offences. Should some more serious fault have been committed, the father of the circumcision condemns the boy to " drink goat's milk ". There is a shrub called " mbuti " ; the same word also means goat. Three sticks of it are taken. The boy must present his hands, put them against each other and separate the fingers. The sticks are introduced between the fingers and a strong man, taking both ends of the sticks in his hands, presses them together and lifts the poor boy, squeezing and half crushing his fingers.

In former times, the boys who had tried to escape or who had revealed the secrets of the sungi to women, or to the uninitiated, were hanged on the last day of the school and burnt to ashes, together with all the contents of the lodge.

Death. The circumcised must also be prepared to die if their wound does not heal properly and if the Manyabe's medicine is not successful. Many of them have died indeed. It is absolutely prohibited to mourn over them. The mother of the deceased is informed of his death by a notch cut in the edge of the pot in which she brings the food. She must not cry. The corpse is buried in a wet place, in a grave dug with sticks, as it would make people suspicious if the shepherds were to go to the village and take spades for that work.

IV. *The teaching of formulae.*

So the boys are taught endurance, obedience, manliness... But there is another side to the training of the Ngoma. It has been compared sometimes to a school and it is true that there is some intellectual learning in it, though very scanty and insignificant. Every morning the candidates are brought together to the place of the formulae (nau-milau, law, prescription). There is a tree in the midst of this square. A special instructor, whose father has already exercised this function, climbs on the tree and begins to teach the boys. He says :

Little boys, do you hear me. I say...

Then come the words of the secret formulae which are a great taboo and which they must learn by heart, sentence after sentence. I have collected some of them, Thonga and Pedi. Here I will only reproduce the Thonga. They are partly incomprehensible, even to the initiated. The first one is called *Manhengwana*. It is the name of a bird.

Masumanyana a nga suma...
The little bird has sung.
A nga suma tinghala ta timhingo...
It has stirred the handles of the lances which are like lions...
T'entsha ku ya tlhabana...
They pierce each other...
Manhengu. Manhengu bentshile. Bentsha tirula...
The bird.. ? ?
Fula ngoma... Mukhubela wa hantana...
Forged at the lodge. ?
Milumbyana saben. Sabe khulu ra barimi.
? in the sand. The great sand of the ploughmen.
Ntje-ntje bya ngulube... Bya shinana sha rila...
The running of the wild pig... Of the frog which cries...
Byi longolokile byi ya kamba ntjonga wa mbila.
They are walking in good order, they go to visit the mysterious hut.
Ba kuma byi ri busonga, songa bya timhiri ni timhamba. .
They find it like the twisted rings of the adder.

These words, so far as they have a sense, seem to extol the Ngoma and its lodge. These assagais, which are like lions which are going to tear each other, represent the school which

is starting, awakened by the bird of the winter. The running of the wild pig is the life of the boy who was idling on the spot till the initiation makes a man of him. The croaking of the frog (shinana) is his childish stupidity. The shinana is a strange animal indeed, a small Batracian which is able, when attacked, to swell considerably: then it becomes so hard that its enemies, even a cock with a sharp beak, cannot pierce it. The circumcised, before the initiation, was a shinana before it swelled up. By the trials of the Ngoma, he will become like this frog, an invulnerable and untamable adversary. In the last sentences we see the bukwera, the troup of the circumcised, penetrating into the mysterious hut, into the Ngoma, and wondering at the extraordinary wisdom which is found there. The laws, rites and trials are like the inextricable intermingling of many snakes.

The sungi is then celebrated again in the following sentences :

A mi ri i sungi...
Say, it is the lodge.
Hansi ka rona, i tleketleka,
On the ground, there is a disgusting smell,
Henhla ka rona i tlulawula...
On the roof, it is elevated and beautiful...
Makomole i mhandje...
Its upholders are poles...
Tinga hi hala n'djibalelo...
Long rods unite the poles... etc.

Nwatjabatjabane a nga tjabatjaba...
The heavy body which goes on heavily...
Shikari ka mipungu ni mihlanga...
Through the drifts and the reeds...
Masheka ya le ndjako, marumbu a wela ndjen.
Which must be cut open from the behind, because its bowels fall down inside its body.
I ngwenya.
It is the crocodile.

Shiborekeketa mahlaluku makambaku...
The beast which opens the road to the drifts for the elephants. .
A ta hi ku nwa ni ku hlamba...
It goes to drink and to bathe...
A mi ri mfubu ?
Do you not say, it is the hippopotamus ?

Nwatjabatjabane makandjya ka ku oma...
The beast whichmarches slowly on the dry ground...
Ku sa ku baleka nhlangasi,
And a marsh is formed by its heavy footsteps,
Ndlopfu, shibangamaphesa a nga riphembe, hi yona...
It is the elephant the one who provides clothing (by the sale of its teeth) the one who brings wealth, it is he !

These formulae are so characteristic that they provide the principal pass words by which the circumcised recognize each

Phot. A. Borel

Cutting open a crocodile near the Nkomati river.

other. Should I want to know if a man is initiated, I should say to him: "*Mashindla bya ndjako*, the beast which must be opened from behind." If he answers at once: "Ngwenya, the crocodile", I know that he has been circumcised.

There are also some obscene formulae which refer to some diseases of women, of which never a word is told outside the Ngoma.

When the instructor has finished, he lifts his stick with a certain gesture and all the boys shout at once : " Zithari ! " Viguet told me that that exclamation meant : " They are as long as that " and that it was an obscene allusion. The old men take great delight in being flattered and, if the boys want to add to their pleasure, they will say : " When you spit, the wind from your mouth would kill enemies at the other end of the country ! "

As is plain from these quotations, the teaching of the Ngoma is quite trivial and the formulae are rather a collection of esoteric words than a proper intellectual training.

The songs of the Ngoma have no richer meaning. We have seen already the song of the Elephant and of the Winter-bird... Every morning, just after they wake, the circumcised sing for a long time the following words, which they repeat also when coming back from hunting trips.

Sing your song, bird of the morn
Mafé-é-é-é !

The melody is rude, wild but very impressive. Mafé-é-é-é must mean : " We are the initiated, we are the men ! "

Hunting. Hunting is the only useful thing taught in the Ngoma. Boys go almost every day to the velt and become very clever in catching game. They beat the bush, sometimes climb hills and chase all the game to the top killing it there with their assagais, knobkerries, etc. Near Shiluvane they even attack the Mamotsuiri mountain once during their three months. All the men of the country are summoned to take part in the big expedition which requires real strategic skill.

To sum up the rites of this marginal period of the Circumcision school, this is the program of a day in the sungi : The shepherds awaken the boys very early. They sing for one hour the Winter-bird. Then they learn the formulae for one or two hours. Afterwards the order : " Tshayi goma " is heard and they throw away the leaves of yesterday and put on a new

"shondlo". They go and sit round the elephant and stab him for two hours till a cry is heard: the women bringing the food announce that they have come. The boys eat for the first time and sing again to help digestion. At the command: "Khedi goma", they smear their body with white clay. The sun is already high in the sky when they start for their hunting trip. They come back at sunset, eat for the second time, stab the Elephant again for one hour and at the command "Khwerere, Mayise, Mafefo", they go to their bed on the dirty soil of their hut.

c) Aggregation Rites.

I. *The Mulagaru.*

The first aggregation rite already takes place many days before the conclusion of the school. One morning, very early, the men and the shepherds raise a very big pole in the yard of the formulae and fix it into a hole. At its extremity is a man, half hidden in white hair. The boys are awakened and led by the shepherds into the yard. They are told to lie down on their backs, all their heads turned towards the pole which is called *mulagaru*, and to say: "Good morning grandfather". Then a voice comes from the top of the pole and says: "I greet you, my grandchildren". They must remain a long time in that position in the biting cold of the morning, talking with the "grandfather". They are allowed even to complain of their sufferings and to ask permission to return home. But they still have to stay some days in the sungi. Every morning this ceremony will be repeated. It clearly means that the boys are being put into communication with the ancestor who represents the clan, that they begin to be admitted to the adult life of the tribe.

A few days later, the great doctor administers to the boys a medicine of purification which they drink in a mouthful of beer. This rite seems to be rather a separation than an aggregation rite. We often see, when a marginal period comes to its end, separation rites taking place. They mean separation from the *marginal period* itself which also involved a kind of pollution

which must be removed. Such is probably the aim of the medicine given by the Manyabe. On the other hand, this is also an aggregation rite, as the boys are allowed to drink again for the first time.

II. *The Mayiwayiwane dance.*

The second true aggregation rite is called the Mayiwayiwane dance. The *Mayiwayiwane* are a sort of masks which cover the whole of the upper part of the body, a kind of armour made up of woven palm leaves; on the head, it is like a very high helmet protruding in front like a beak. The boys make these masks with the help of the shepherds and of the men and, under this disguise, must perform a special dance with high jumps before the women summoned on a certain day to attend. The boys must not be recognized. Should one of them let the mask fall, it would be a great misfortune, because women must not know who is dancing. Moreover the initiated must appear before them as a kind of supernatural beings and fill them with respect and awe. Therefore they must not fall when they dance. Should one of them totter and lose his equilibrium, the shepherds cover him with a heap of grass and the men say: "He is dead!" Because a circumcised cannot fall and live. One of the shepherds goes in haste to a village of the neighbourhing tribe, buys a fowl which is killed and its blood is sprinkled over the grass; the boy who fell escapes when the women have gone home, but the next day, when they come back to the spot, they see the blood and are convinced that, in very truth, a circumcised dies when he falls!

A Mayiwayiwane mask.

Sometimes a little child is taken from the arms of its mother and brought to the place where the boys are sitting, hidden during the dance. They kiss him and smile at him, because he is an innocent; he can see what women are not allowed to contemplate!

III. *The last day.*

The last day is marked by the greatest and most difficult trial. During the whole preceding night, the boys are not allowed to sleep... Sleep is the last enemy they must overcome. They stab the Elephant and repeat the formulae till the morning. Then all the bits of skin remaining from the circumcising are picked up by the Manyabe ; he burns them, makes them into a powder with which he smears the mulagaru pole. All the masks, the grass mats are thrown on the roof of the shed and, at dawn, the troop of circumcised, surrounded by the shepherds and men, is directed towards a pool and made to run to it without looking backwards; (separation from the sungi, from the seclusion period). If they were to look at what is taking place behind them, their eyes would be pierced and they would be blind for ever! Fire is put to the whole establishment by some of the men and all the filth and ignorance of childhood is burnt in this great conflagration. The boys are led into the water, wash away the white clay, cut their hair (separation rite), anoint themselves with ochre, put on some new clothing and are addressed by the father of the circumcision:

" You are no longer *shuburu*! Try now to behave like men. It would be unworthy of you to steal sweet potatoes in the fields as you used to do before. Now the Ngoma is closed and it is taboo to pronounce the formulae or to sing the songs of the sungi. Don't reveal a word of them to anybody; if a boy does so he will be strangled! " etc.

That same day the women bring porridge with sauce flavourings and the shepherds are no more allowed to use insulting words when they receive the pots from their hands.

IV. *The Chameleon procession.*

All these are evidently aggregation rites. But the greatest of all is the procession of the initiated into the capital of the chief which takes place on the day of the closing of the sungi and on the following one... Covered with ochre, marching on mats which have been spread on the ground so that they do not touch the dust with their feet, they advance slowly, bowed to the ground, stretching out first one leg then the other with a sudden brisk motion, trying to imitate the gait of the chameleon, the wise, the prudent... They are men who think and no longer boys without intelligence! Then they all sit on the central place of the capital, their heads always bowed, and the sisters and mothers who have come from all the different villages must go and recognize them. Each woman brings with her a bracelet or a shilling or any small present and searches for her boy amongst the throng. When she thinks she has found him, she kisses him on the cheek and gives him the present. Then the boy rises, strikes a good blow on the shoulder of the woman and utters the new name which he has chosen. In answer to this demonstration, the mother begins to dance and to sing the praises of her son!

The chameleon procession is performed in the villages of the main headmen of the tribe during the few following days till, at last, the ochre of the initiated is removed and they return home definitely.

SOME REMARKS ON THE CIRCUMCISION SCHOOL

The square form of the sungi sheds, so different from the circular form adopted by the Bantu for their homes and implements, might be the trace of a Semitic influence. But, on the whole, all these rites are holding well together and their sequence is quite easy to understand.

The Ngoma is truly a puberty rite, but not a sexual initiation. The suspension of conjugal relations, the prevalence of licentious language might give the idea that it is in direct relation with the sexual life. But these two phenomena are met with on other occasions, as we shall see, and seem to be characteristic occurrences in most of the marginal

periods. Moreover boys of ten and twelve and men of twenty five or more can be occasionally admitted to the sungi and this proves that the school has nothing to do with marriage, properly speaking. Neither is the Ngoma a pure act of aggregation to a determined clan. Boys of one clan often go to the sungi of another chief to be initiated; they do not become his subjects by so doing. Even Thonga sometimes enter into Suto lodges and Malemba have a special place in them. It is true that the Ngoma is the business of the chief. Only those who are really chiefs have the right to build a lodge. But though the initiated are exhorted to become good subjects of their chief, the intention of the circumcision school is rather to introduce the little boy *into manhood*, to cleanse him from the *bukhuna* (p. 56) to make him a thoughtful adult member of the community.

What judgment must we pass on this custom to which some tribes still cling with great pertinacity? This teaching of endurance and of hunting has certainly some value. However these rites as a whole have very little worth and are useless in the new economy of South Africa. The obcene language allowed during the Ngoma tends certainly to pervert the mind of the boys and forms an immoral preparation for the sexual life.

Though the Government could not at once suppress the custom, I think it might use its influence in checking it. As for the Mission, it has naturally fought against this school of heathenism, but not always with success; boys, even Christians boys, are wonderfully attracted by it and many have left their spelling book for the formulæ of Manhengwane!

Have we nothing to learn from the Ngoma? One hundred and seventy thousand children of black South Africa are now attending our schools... more or less regularly. Hundreds of young men are boarding in our Normal Institutions. Are we always succeeding in this great educational work? Its results are not quite satisfactory because most of the children do not stay long enough in the school to be properly taught. As soon as they have acquired some knowledge of reading and writing, they leave and go to the towns to earn money. Whatever the teacher may say, they escape... I must confess that we do not control them as well as the Father of the Circumcision... The Ngoma shows us however that a strict discipline is quite possible with native boys and that we must deal with them, without any tinge of harshness of course but, with a firm hand. When the inmates of our institutions complain that the sauce of their porridge is not

savoury enough, we might remind them of the food their heathen comrades are eating in the Ngoma !

There is a striking ressemblance between Bantu circumcision, Jewish circumcision and Christian baptism.

In Jewish circumcision, the same physical operation was performed, but it was performed on infants. It had certainly also the meaning of an ablation, a carrying off of pollution and an introduction into the holy nation. In the course of time, the notion was spiritualised and circumcision meant the removal of sin. But it had a strong religious character : Jahvé was marking his chosen people by their circumcision. This religious element is wanting in the Ngoma of the Thonga and the Suto and the national meaning alone remains.

As regards baptism, the great difference between the heathen and the Christian rite is evidently this : Christian baptism is not only a religious but also a moral rite. Under its normal form, which is the immersion of adult catechumens, it represents in a striking manner the washing away of sin and the admission to the Church of Christ ; it is a rite of passage : separation from the old life of sin, marginal period of instruction, aggregation to a holy community...

The Ngoma has no such spiritual and moral notions, but it has been inspired by the same deep and true idea of the necessity in the evolution of man of a progress which consists in the renunciation of a miserable past and the introduction into higher life. This idea is certainly one of these rays of light, which we are happy to discover amidst the darkness of heathendom, one of these " points d'attache " to which we can tie truths of spiritual religion.

II. *Other Puberty Rites*

The Ngoma has disappeared in most of the Thonga clans, but there are a few other puberty rites which have been preserved all through the tribe.

1) The custom of the erotic dream (Tilorela).

When a young man has noticed for the first time an emissio seminis, he is said to have become an adult (a kulile, a

thombile) to have " drunk the nkanye ". The nkanye is the tree from which the bukanye is made. It is prepared for the great feast of the new year. *To drink the nkanye* is an euphemism to designate the entrance into a new phase of life, into the age of puberty. According to Mboza, the lad must go early in the morning to wash his body and that is all. But Tobane says that, in the Mpfumo clan, the family doctor is called ; in a broken pot, he roasts pieces of skin of all the beasts of the veldt, together with some half digested grass taken from the stomach of a goat (psanyi). The boy must eat a little of this medicine and rub all his joints with it. This medication will strengthen him so that, when he has relations with girls, he will not be overcome (gemiwa) by them. This rite, which is very similar to the rite of the broken pot performed for infants, is connected with the " gangisa ", the sexual habits of young people which begin at the time of puberty, as we shall see later on.

At this time also, the boy begins to wear the very primitive clothing called *shifado* (sha ku siba, the thing with which one closes, see Note). In former times they wore only the *mbayi*, a small cylindrical or conical object of woven palm leaves which was the national dress of the Thonga ; the *shifado* seems to be of Zulu origin. It is very much valued as preventing contact with the earth : a protection against ants and an aid to continence ; the lads who do not wear it are blamed and accused of being *ba-nato*. The word *nato* means a magical medicine by means of which men of low morals throw men or women into a deep sleep during the night, enter the huts of other people and commit adultery with their wives.

2) The piercing of the ears (Ku tjunya, (Ro.), boshela. (Dj.).

Takes place also at this period. There are two ways of performing this, either by a proper piercing of the lower lobe with a thorn or by cutting it with a knife. The first method is the old Thonga custom and has been preserved by the

women in the original form, at least amongst the Ba-Ronga ; they frequently pass a ring through the small opening thus produced. The second one was practised by the Zulu-Ngoni and was adopted by the Thonga men in order to resemble their conquerors. The result is an ugly hole. This is not a law imposed by the chief; however it is kept universally. When a lad does not pierce his ears his comrades mock him and say : " U toya " ! " You are a coward ! We shall put a spoonful of porridge in this big ear of yours ! " (Viz. It will hold food because it is not pierced !)

The operation is performed in the winter by a man who knows how to do it. Before it is begun, the boy bites the *ndjao*, the root of a kind of reed which is considered the best means of strengthening the virile force. The doctor introduces into the hole a small piece of reed ; he takes it out every day to wash the wound and puts it in again to keep the hole open. As long as the ear is not healed, the lad must eat his food without salt : he must not go about in the kraals and partake of the porridge of other people, because this food might have been prepared by women having intercourse with their husbands (ba ku khila) and this would make him very ill. He must also keep away from girls. When he is healed, he takes away the piece of hard reed and replaces it by a nice white object.

Some Thonga tatoo themselves or used to do it formerly, but this custom is disappearing and is now preserved only by women. We shall describe it in the chapter on the Evolution of the woman, as well as the *hleta* custom, the pointing of teeth.

It is probable that in former times the taboo character of these various ceremonies was more marked that now. Actually they are but a *shihila sha tiko*, a custom of the country.

3) The Gangisa.

When a boy has gone through the puberty rites, he is grown up and is allowed to practise the *gangisa*. This word comes from *ganga* which means " to choose a lover ". Each girl is

asked by the boys to choose one of them ; they *make them choose* (gangisa, factitive derivate). I once witnessed some boys — they were still very young — flirting round three or four girls just as bees round ripe plums, running after them saying repeatedly : Choose me! « Choose me! » There is a special blue cotton print with large white patterns which is called " gangisa ntombi " viz. to make a girl choose, as it is offered by the lover to the damsel of his choice in order to obtain her favour. When a girl has made her choice, her boy plays with her as husband and wife, first in building little huts, etc. but later on in a less platonic way. In fact nothing is prohibited in the relations between young people of both sexes. A married woman is sacred amongst the Thonga, but an unmarried girl is not. However she must not become pregnant. If this happens, the parents will say to the lover : " You have spoiled our daughter, you must buy her in marriage ". If he refuses, the child will belong to the family of the girl. Excesses in gangisa are condemned. A boy who commits them is said to be an adulterer (a ni bupse); of a girl they say : « She will lose her head (a ta ba singe). »

As the unmarried boys and girls live in special huts, the *lao* of the boys and the *nhanga* of the girls, at the entrance of the village, it is easy for them to meet during the night. During the day, they behave themselves generally becomingly. But when the lads pay visits to their girls who sing to the accompaniment of rattles, they stay sometimes with them till late in the night. They bring them small presents, clothing or anything else, and thus get permission to have intercourse with them. Mboza described to me a very immoral meeting which takes place sometimes in those huts in connection with the *milebe* habit, and which belongs to this gangisa. It is impossible to give the details here. Students of ethnography can find a full description of it in my paper published in the " Revue d'études ethnographiques ". I have also there tried to prove this curious fact : that sexual relations between unmarried people are not considered as having the same ritual value as intercourse between those lawfully married.

The gangisa custom is, from our point of view, very immoral. Amongst natives it is not censured at all and it would be more accurate to speak of *amorality* than of *immorality*, amongst them, on this particular point. A boy who has no such flirt no *shigango*, is laughed at as a coward ; a girl who refuses to accept such advances is accused of being malformed. However Mboza told me he had never had a shigango himself and the abuse in this respect is not approved by old people. In Manyisa, I heard of a young chief who was leading all the lads to gangisa and forced the girls to accept them. The extent of this evil depends very much on the character of the boys and girls. I may add that, as regards the young people of the capital, they are not allowed to practise the gangisa because they belong to the royal family and are closely watched.

When becoming Christians, natives readily accept our standard of morality ; but cases of fornication are very frequent amongst converts, so much so that this has been rightly called the African sin! I mention this fact. I must say on the other hand that thousands of pupils in our Native Institutions lead a very moral and continent life and they do not seem to find it very difficult.

If the gangisa spoils all the life of the young heathen, it is only just to add that they do not practise two vices which are prevalent amongst certain civilised nations, onanism and sodomy. These immoral customs were entirely unknown in the Thonga tribe before the coming of civilisation. Unhappily it is no longer so now. I know boys on missionary stations who learned masturbation in the towns and, as regards sodomy, it is raging now in Johannesburg compounds and in the prisons of the Transvaal to a fearful extent. Thonga and Zulu are particularly addicted to it. In some prisons they constrain the new comers by violence to indulge in it. This new evil ought to be combated with the utmost rigour. In this as in many other respects, civilisation threatens to destroy the native life.

Comparing the habits of the Pedi and of the Thonga we meet with this strange fact: Amongst the Thonga the unmarried girl is quite free and the married woman is taboo. Amongst the

Pedi it is just the reverse : girls are absolutely prohibited from having any sexual relation before their marriage and, on the contrary, after marriage, a woman who has had children can have intercourse with other men than her husband. I am afraid this difference does not come from a higher morality on the part of the Pedi. As far as I could make it out, the explanation is this : The Pedi fathers " lobola " girls for their sons much earlier than the Thonga. They push the prevision so far that a man will buy " a womb ", viz, a girl before her birth for his baby son ! This girl not yet born will be given a name, the name of her future son ; and if every thing happens in conformity with these previsions, that name will be definitely adopted for the girl on the day she is married ! If however the child which is born happens to be a boy, the money will be given back. Moreover most girls have already their lawful husband when they are born, because every boy has a kind of right of preemption on the daughter of his maternal uncle, on their " mudzwala ", as this relative is called. In that way, girls are not free : they must keep absolutely pure ; in some clans (the Venda e. g.), they must even undergo a physical examination on the day of their marriage at the hands of the old female relatives of the husband to prove their virginity. If afterwards, being married women, they are allowed to lead a very bad life, so bad that it is quite possible to speak of polyandry amongst some Pedi clans, it is probably due to the dreadful fear of the lochia to which we have already alluded. The chief of the Bukhaha (Shiluvane Country) married only virgins. He had intercourse with his new wife till she had her first child. Then she was impure ; he feared to have any more relations with her and allowed her to live with her lovers. Each of his wives had a regular lover, a kind of second husband. When this chief bought a new wife, he was said to " lobolela tiko ", to buy her for his country, for his subjects ! The subjects, being miserable, overcame their own fears and accepted the royal present ! Neither the Thonga nor the Pedi system of sexual manners is much to be admired ; but if I had to make a choice, I think I would prefer the Thonga to the Pedi !

* * *

In his book on Kafir Socialism, Dudley Kidd has laid great stress on the fact that the mental development of the African native is arrested at the time of puberty and he has tried to find remedies for this inferiority. It may be said that the vivacity of mind, the rapidity of comprehension which is sometimes wonderful in younger boys decreases when they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen. Even cases can be recorded amongst them of an arrest or a slackening in the evolution of psychical faculties at the time of puberty. But this is by no means the rule. In all our Institutions we have pupils who show great zeal for study and increased intellectual power between sixteen and twenty. I may say that Dr Mac Vicar of Lovedale concluded as I do, that this assertion of D. Kidd is very much exaggerated.

D. MARRIAGE

According to the old Thonga idea it is only when a boy is full grown that he can think of marriage. In former times lads used to enjoy their youth in carelessness and pleasure, going to dance in all the villages, till they were twenty five years old. Nowadays boys marry very early. Money is found more easily to lobola and "gangisa" is not as easy as it used to be, two reasons which hasten the time of marriage in the present generation.

I. *The Love charms.*

Should a boy not have been successful in his "gangisa", should he be despised by the girls and have no chance of being accepted, a special rite is performed to help him to find a wife.

The Ba-Ronga do not know the love-philter as such, but they have a substitute for it; the old village cock is put on the lad's head and kept there for a long time; the cock scratches him with his claws; he is then let go. The boy will now succeed; he will be like the cock who never lacks spouses! (Mboza).

Other charms are used for girls, especially a certain medicine which produces an abundant lather when boiled in water. The physician washes her body with it and then she will "appear" (a ta boneka) to the eyes of would-be suitors (Tobane).

Should however a girl not find a husband in the lawful way, she has another mean at her disposal, the marriage by abduction, and thus no one or hardly any one remains unmarried amongst the Thonga. Mankhelu, who was a great doctor, treated this « complaint of singleness » with more seriousness! He used his strongest medicines to heal the boy or the girl who was unable to find a partner in life. This is the treatment followed by him : He takes a she-goat, if it be for a boy, a he-goat if for a girl, anoints it with fat mixed with his precious medicinal powder; he rubs the animal (hondla) from the mouth to the tail, extends all its limbs and kills it. No prayer is offered but the *psanyi* (the half digested grass which is found in the stomach) is carefully collected. The boy is then called, enters his own hut, spreads a mat on the ground, sits on it quite naked and rubs his whole body with this substance. "A tihorola, a tilurulula" says Mankhelu. He rubs away from himself all his filth. When he has finished, he coughs to call the doctor who comes and gathers into a pot all the "timhorola", the particles which have fallen on the mat; he takes a portion, squeezes it into a small bag of lizard-skin so as to make a *shitjungulu* or amulet. The sister will have to come after sunset without any clothing into the hut of the boy and will tie the bag round his neck. What remains of the *timhorola* will be used to smear the hut. Then all the girls will love him ; or if it be a girl, she will soon be asked in marriage.

This ceremony is a characteristic *hondlola*, the same which is performed on the weaning day (see page 57) and after any serious disease; it is a rite of removal of impurity. (Notice the

termination ola, ula, ulula in those verbs; it means generally to undo, to take away).

Let us now hear from Tobane the description of the marriage rites amongst the Mpfumo clan. We shall afterwards see how the customs differ in other Ronga and Thonga clans.

II. *Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan.*

1) The betrothal (buta).

When a young man has made up his mind to get married, and when he is in possession of the necessary lobola(1) cattle, he starts, one fine day, with two or three of his friends to look for a wife in the villages. He puts on his most brillant ornaments and his most precious skins. Here they are, arriving on the square of the village; they sit down in the shade. They are asked: "What do you want?" "We have come to see the girls", they answer bluntly. And the reply is: "All right. Look at them."

Of course the girls do their very best to be as pleasing as possible, as the mother has told them that these are suitors. The suitor is easily known by his special attire, a belt of skins either of leopard or tiger cat. He goes from one yard to the other, talks with the cooks, inquires their names, looking at them as, with a vigourous and graceful movement of the body, they crush the mealies in their mortar. If the seekers have found what they want, they return home, if not, they go to the next hamlet. (Let us say here that each village consists of not

(1) *Ku lobola* means to buy in marriage. *Ku lobola* (a factitive derivate of the verb) is said of a father who claims a sum of money from his daughter's suitor. *Lobolo* or *ndjobolo* or *bukosi* (wealth) is the sum paid, the oxen, the hoes, or the pounds sterling. We shall use these words which are employed in Thonga as well as in Suto and in Zulu and which ought to be adopted as ethnographic technical terms. I use the verb for the act of paying and the noun for the sum itself.

more than six to twelve huts built in a circle, and leaving a central circular place, the shaded "square", of which the oxen kraal occupies the middle.) (See Part II.)

When he is satisfied, the suitor goes home and says to his parents : "So an so pleases me. Go and woo her. (Ku buta)." Then a middle aged man of the village is sent to the parents of the young girl. He is received in the father's hut and, with all the circumlocutions required by etiquette, he carries out his errand. The girl is called and told that the visitor who came the other day has chosen her ; she is asked if she also loves him (or if she wants him... for there is only one word in Ronga to express these two kindred notions, ku randja). « Oh ! is it the one who looked thus and so and who wore this and that ? Yes, I consent to accept (to eat) the money out of his hands (ku da bukosi ku yene). » If she does not care for him, she will declare it quite as plainly : the suitor will have to seek elsewhere. It is a fact worth noting that, amongst these so-called savages, a father very seldom obliges his daughter to accept a husband whom she dislikes, except in the case of debts. If the matter is arranged to the satisfaction of all parties the buta (1) or betrothal is concluded and the messenger is feasted, while he, on his part, gives a present (shihlengwe) to the girl's parents of the value of a hoe or ten shillings ; this present "strengthens their bones" (ba tiya marambo) and nothing further remains to be done but to choose the day on which the betrothal visit will take place.

2) The betrothal visits (Tjekela and koroka).

This visit (ku ya ku tjekelen) is paid in the following manner. The fiancé chooses his best friend to be his "shangwane" ; the fiancée does the same on her part and these two "shangwane" must do their best to help them both during the whole of these complicated ceremonies. Then the bridegroom

(1) *Buta* might be a factitive derivate of the verb *bula*, to speak : to cause somebody to speak, to give an answer.

assembles, together with his shangwane, three or four other friends of his own age and a little lad to carry their mats. They go and bathe and put on their finest attire : rich skins, bracelets hung on their belts, horse-hair necklaces with white beads threaded here and there which wave up and down on neck and breast. Neither do they forget their small shields of skin which give them a martial appearance without, however, suggesting any thought of war or strife. Before starting they take a good meal cooked at home. In the evening, after sunset, they reach the village of the fiancée. They sit down outside the gate and cough to make known they have arrived. Then the inhabitants, who were expecting them, come out to meet them and beg them to enter. The visitors make difficulties. They pretend not to want to do so. The people of the village insist. At last, with apparent reluctance, they advance into the central square. A hut is prepared for them and they are invited to go and rest there. They begin by refusing. But the young girls take out of their hands their sticks and their miniature shields and carry them into the hut. At last, with a bored air, they enter. Mats are brought and unrolled before them; this is the act of hospitality par excellence. They remain standing as if they had no wish whatever to sit down. Girls entreat them to rest and finally they consent to accept the hospitality offered them with such insistence.

The parents of the fiancée then come, squat near them and ask news of their home. They answer and inquire about the health of their hosts. This is the *djungulisana*, the exchange of greetings which always takes place when a visitor is received. Soon however large pots of well prepared food are brought : "No", say the young men. "We have eaten at home, we are not hungry." The same comedy is gone through again ; the masters of the place insist, the guests refuse systematically according to the native laws of civility — or incivility ! The night however has come. The young men have consented after all to partake of the feast. The old people retire to their huts to sleep. The young girls remain. The custom requires them to spend the whole night with the young men according to the law of the

shigango which was spoken of previously. The bridegroom's shangwane chooses the bride's shangwane and all the other boys choose their girl. But the fiancée hides behind her friends and takes no part in these immoral games.

In the early morning the young men go to bathe and the girls, their amphoras on the head, go to fetch water from the

Drawing water from the Maputju river. *Phot. A. Borel*

lake. On their return they perform another act of hospitality towards their visitors, namely they throw water down their backs. The boys wash the whole of their bodies after which the girls anoint them with fat. The day is spent in a pleasant far niente... The fiancé and his friends sit in the shade on the square, clad in all their ornaments. They hum songs, they amuse themselves by swaying themselves about whilst sitting; the little girls keep them company. Meanwhile the elder girls prepare nice food for them and go to the fields. Towards evening, the visitors ask to see the parents to take leave of them;

but the old people send the following word: "No, you will not see us. We cannot consent to your going away, we have hardly seen you. Spend another night with us." They must make up their mind to stay a little longer. In fact it is exactly what the young men want and the second night is spent as the first.

The third day they go away. All the young girls accompany them along the paths, far, far away, and, when they part, boys and girls tie together high standing grasses on the veldt (ku ba mafundju hi byanyi), a touching symbol of their loves! Seeing these knots during the whole season at a crossway, passers-by will know that lovers parted there. On taking leave, the young people arrange another meeting. The girls will go after a week or two to return the visit.

In fact, to the *tjekela* of the boys corresponds the *koroka* of the girls. "They make the betrothal visit to see the husband (ba ya ku koroken, ku ya bona nuna)". They also put on their finest attire: red and white cloth; in their curled hair, a small crown of blue and red beads looking really pretty; on ankles and wrists, bracelets of twisted iron wire.

On the appointed day, they go and sit outside the village of the fiancé and cough to announce their presence. The same strange goings on begin, but this time it is the damsels who make difficulties and the young men must beg and entreat them to enter first the village, then the hut and then to sit on the mats and to accept food. Each of the groomsmen is most attentive to the girl he chose at the preceeding meeting and, to obtain her good will, he generally gives her a fowl or the equivalent in money. In the early morning the visitors rise, go and get water, warm it a little and pour it into basins before the doors of the huts, so that, on that day, the inhabitants of the village will make their ablutions with water fetched by them. Then they go and do feminine work, making themselves the servants of the fiancé's parents. Thus they remove the ashes from the fire-place and throw them on the ash-heap close by; they cut the wood for the young men's mothers and light the several fires of the village. They pretend to leave when the

sun sets, but no one will hear of it and they must spend another night. At last, on the following day, they go home, accompanied by the young men and again, at parting, knot grasses together. On the day of the *koroka* decisive arrangement are made for the wedding.

3) Taboos of the betrothal period.

The two families which enter into relation by marriage must observe many taboos (See Part II). Here are some of those which are enforced during the visits of *tjekela* and *koroka :*

1) The visitors must not eat all the mealie corn on the spike; they must leave a few grains on it.

2) They must not tear off the leaves which are round the spike. When they have eaten all the corn, they rearrange those leaves nicely in such a way that the cob seems not to have been touched.

3) They must not " make a hole in the pot " (bobota hotjo), viz. they leave a portion of the liquid in the beer pot, they do not empty it entirely.

4) It is forbidden to return home in rain when one has gone to *tjekela*. One must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an insult to the future father-in-law.

5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor — the owner of the oxen — must not eat black fish that day. His friends only have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black : it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, slips... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about ; thus the

marriage "might be scattered (hangalasa bukati) before it is ripe". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo, as long as the families had not yet killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are familial taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by mutual distrust of two allied families.

The wedding feast is composed of two parts: the *lobola feast* viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobola which takes place at the bride's village and the *tlhoma* viz, the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close at hand. Especially the bride's family must prepare in good time, as they have to get ready the beer which will be consumed in great quantities. The brewing requires several days. All the relations of the young girl agree on a day to begin operations in the several villages they inhabit. First of all the grains must be taken out of all the mealie spikes which were kept in the small cellar huts (ku hula). The following day these mealie seeds are steeped in cold water, in large pots. When they have become sufficiently soft, they are pounded (kandja) in wooden mortars, the yeast of millet is added (kandela) and the preparation is then boiled (pseka). On the day of the boiling, the family of the fiancé is informed that to-morrow the beer will be drained off and that on the following day the wedding will begin.

That same day the bridegroom with his friends goes to his future parents-in-law. He does not find his sweetheart there; she has wisely been hidden in the neighbourhood. He brings

with him a goat which will subsequently play an important part in the proceedings. The next day the whole family of the fiancé assembles and they make sure that the provision of hoes or the number of pounds sterling for the lobolo is complete. The third day they all start.

b) The assault of the village.

Let us describe this most curious feature of the feast as it took place forty years ago, when English gold was not yet known in the country and when the price of a wife was paid in hoes. These hoes, to the number of forty or fifty, were distributed among the relatives who carried them on their heads. In a long row, they wind along the path. When they approach close to the bride's village, most of them sit down in the shade whilst a few young men go on before to make the assault. The bride's brothers guard the doors of the circular thorny fence which generally surrounds the villages. Provided with their sticks, they mean to prevent the aggressors from entering. In vain! The assailants jump about in the bush, rush over the barriers, are pursued by the sentinels, run across the square, try to steal pitchers of beer, whilst the boys of the village hit them as hard as they can.

Taking advantage of this tumult the older men arrive and pointing with the finger to the hoes they carry on their heads, they murmur the following words: "Here is our ox! It does not know how to drink! It does not know how to drink! (Homu a yi nwi! a yi nwi!)" The others rush towards them, try to steal their burdens and to bar the way; all this goes on amidst laughter and until one of the old people of the bride's village says: "Let us leave them! (A hi ba tjikene!)" Then the company enters, laden with the precious hoes.

c) The counting of the lobolo.

The implements are deposited in the centre of the square and fixed into the ground by tens. The hoes used by the Thonga, whether of native or European make, are lengthened and pointed in such a way that they can be introduced into a wooden handle, somewhat like the tools of the lake dwellers. They

have a very remote resemblance to an ace of spades with a pointed shaft.

The bride's family gathers to ascertain if the number agreed upon is there. They remark to one another that there are so and so many of them. "Look, they say, they have paid such and such a lobolo. (Labisan ba lobolile ha kukari.)" It is very important that there should be a large number of witnesses, for who knows to how many discussions and quarrels these hoes will give rise if the marriage turns out badly? When this counting is done, all hearts being gladened by the sight of the wealth which will eventually allow the bride's brother to get married himself, the jugs of beer, which were brought the day before by the aunts, sisters, and relations of the bride, are fetched in. They pass from one hand to another; the old people, the men, prefer going into a hut where they talk over the latest news whilst they quench their thirst.

d) The wedding procession.

Whilst the old people rest, a goat is taken for the sacrifice and slaughtered at the door of the hut of the bride's mother. Whilst the goat is cut into pieces, the bridegroom's sisters, the big girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the heroine of the day who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. "Let us accompany her, then we shall return home" sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekekeni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to the most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride," as your are becom-

ing the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl!"

To this the bride's relatives shout in return:

"You have nothing to boast about! Give up wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family!"

And they go on in that way, joking at first, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes go even so far as to bombard each other with the half ruminated matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet. These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping on one leg then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

e) The religious act.

The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and groom sit down on the finest. It is now that the father performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between the index and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound ressembling "tsu"... as if he were slightly spitting. It is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking towards them straight in front of him, he speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says: "My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be". Here it may happen that a

brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say: " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have enough of it and want him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to introduce it into the old man's mouth. Thus they "cut" his prayer and he keeps still. The one officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

The astragalus (nholo) of the right leg of the sacrified goat has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip of skin reaching as far as the neck and to the chin which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her back to him. This is doubtless done to wish her good luck so that she may have many descendants. Natives have a special veneration for the astragalus bone which is also used in the divinatory system.

5) The tlhoma, starting of the bride for the conjugal dwelling.

If the lobolo business has been duly concluded, the bride will start on the following day for the conjugal dwelling, accompanied by her friends. The next day, she will be joined by the women of her village who will help her to erect the woodpile (ku koroka shigiyane). They will all go together into the bush to cut a large quantity of branches and will pile them up between two poles covered with ochre in the bride's village. Each

of the husband's relations will take one of these logs during the following months. It is, it seems, a symbolic present from one family to the other.

As for the wood cutters, they take their leave and go home. But what a surprise! Here is the bride going with them! Her sisters take her home again! The husband entreats! In vain! He pursues the woman who, two days before, became his legal wife. To no purpose! He offers her a present to induce her to stay with him. She refuses... This was foreseen. She must go to her mother to fetch her basket (shihundju), her mat, her spoon and other utensils which make up her small trousseau. A last lesson must also be given to the husband: "If we have given you our daughter, do not believe that we have had enough of her! (hi kolile). She is very precious to us and we take her back!"

Patience! To morrow she will come back accompanied by one young girl only who helps to carry her furniture. This time it is for good! At last! « Ba mu tlhomile! »that is to say: her parents have duly settled her in her home.

In Nondwane this last surprise is spared the bridegroom. The bride comes to his home the day of the marriage with her two mats accompanied by a young girl only, and some days later the mother and female relations bring the rest of her trousseau and erect the wood pile. The young bride when she has definitely accepted her fate and consented to stay is called *ntlhonwa* (Ro.) *nhlomi* (Dj.) (the one who has been brought to her husband). During the first week, she will fill all the pots of the people of the village so that when they awake they will find water for their ablutions and say: "We have found a bride! (He kumi ntlhonwa!)"; she will remove all the ashes from the fire places and smear all the huts.

The first night when she sleeps in the hut with her husband, she may refuse to allow him his conjugal rights. The bridegroom then goes to his father and asks him what he ought to do under the circumstances. The father says: "Give her sixpence or one shilling." Then she consents! (Mboza).

III. *Marriage customs in other Ronga clans.*

The description we have just given can be considered as typical, but there are many variations to notice amongst the clans.

In the *Mapuju* country, South of Delagoa Bay, there are two informal visits, one of the fiancé, one of the fiancée, to go and see each other's village (ku bona muti). This visit is very short and they do not accept any food from their hosts. Then the *tjekela* of the boys (the betrothal visit) takes place. They behave in a very dignified manner, do not accept any food the first day and consent to eat on the following day only after having been entreated with a gift of 10/ or £ 1! During this visit the girls put 500 reis or sixpence at the botton of the pots which they fill with water for the ablutions of the boys, otherwhise the visitors would say: "The water is too cold. We cannot use it." Sexual relations between boys and girls during these visits were not allowed in former times. Nowadays they are indulged in and it may be that the fiancé asks his fiancée to give herself to him "to test her love" (ku kamba lirandju). If she refuses, the whole affair may be compromised.

When the girls go to *tjekela* in their turn, they also observe great formality. Money must be given at least ten times to obtain their consent:

1) They refuse to enter the village.
2) To leave the square place and go to the hut.
3) To cross the door of the hut.
4) To sit down on mats. When the other girls consent, the fiancée remains standing.
5) She consents to sit down when given a shilling.
6) They refuse to answer the greetings.
7) When the others have answered, the fiancée still refuses to do so.
8) They do not consent to give news from their home.
9, 10) They still make difficulties in accepting food.

It may be that the fiancé goes to work in the mines during this period, probably in order to complete his lobolo. When he comes back, there is a special ceremony perfomed which is called *hlomula mutwa*, to remove the thorn. The girls pay him a visit. He sits down amidst his companions, having planted in his hair a long white thorn made of bone. The shangwane of the fiancée (chief bridesmaid) approaches him dancing and removes it. It is a way of saluting him on his return. It means the removal of the fatigue and the sufferings he has undergone, of the thorns which have wounded him.

The concluding ceremonies of *thloma* and of the *shigiyane* are also more developed in the Maputju country and in Nondwane.

This is the custom in *Nondwane:* Girls accompany the new bride to the conjugal home. They go to the bush where she has fled, capture her there, and bring her to her husband with songs of mourning (hi ku djila nwana). " Where are you going? You go to a husband whose heart is jealous! You will bring a basket full of mealies to crush : they will say it is but a handful! You will learn to steal and to bewitch (viz. they will accuse you of doing it)." The bride covers her head with a piece of clothing and weeps. So the sad procession reaches the door of the hut of the husband's mother. The bride sits down there. The husband sits near her, but she withdraws from him. Then the men of the village insult her and say: " Come near him"! The old women, the husband's aunts, come and try to remove the veil from her head: "Take it away that we may see you" they say! Two days later they will come again and give her sixpence to take away the clothing with which she was covering her breast and then she will go about the village in the ordinary dress or.. undress.

The building of the wood pile in *Maputju* is also very characteristic. The ceremony takes place on the day of the *thloma*. When the procession is heard coming, far away, the friends of the new husband go and meet it. But the girls who accompany the bride refuse to come near the village. They must be enticed by money : money at each crossway, at the door, on the village square, at the entrance of the hut, etc., money to

put down the logs they bring, the pots of beer they carry... And when all the women have consented to unload themselves, the chief bridesmaid still refuses to do so and must be induced by a larger sum of money! When they have arranged the wood pile, they dance behind it, hiding the bride in their midst. The husband and his friends are sitting on the other side of the pile. Three girls come closer to them, always dancing. One of them is the shangwane. She puts tobacco in the hand of the bride. Then the bride kneels down before her husband at a distance and stretches out her hand to offer him a snuff. He rises to receive it, but, when he has approached quite close to her and has taken a little of the tobacco between his fingers, she throws the remainder of the snuff into his eyes; then she runs away pursued by the husband's friends. If she is swift enough, she succeeds in taking hold of a tuft of grass outside the village. Then no one dares to catch her. It will be necessary to bring more money to induce her to relinquish her hold on the grass. After this, she reenters the village which will be her new abode and this is the end of the end!

IV. *Marriage ceremonies in the Northern clans.*

I have succeeded in getting the whole description of the Nkuna marriage from a very good and clear-headed informant, Simeon Gana. It is somewhat different from the Ronga one.

Here is the resumé(1) of the whole sequence of these rites:

The betrothal visit. (Ku buta). The suitor arrives with his shangwane and an old man who will act as his official representative or go-between (ntjumi). He has already made his choice and the *ntjumi* woos the girl at once in his name. Her father calls her apart and asks her if she consents. If she is disposed to say yes, she begs to speak with the boy. She chooses a

(1) I have explained these rites in detail in a novel entitled *Fazana*, and published in La Semaine Littéraire, Geneva, Nov. & Dec. 1910.

provisionary shangwane. They are both shown into the hut of the girl's mother with their respective shangwane. Let us suppose they come to an understanding; the suitor announces his success to his ntjumi who goes to the girl's father and informs him that she has consented. But the father refuses to accept this notification. He must also choose a ntjumi. This is done the same day. The following day, the two parties meet each in a different hut and the first ntjumi again comes and repeats the whole story, the second ntjumi being present.

Then a long discussion takes place (between the grown up people) as to the lobolo. This discussion is conducted by the two ntjumi who go constantly from one hut to the other, the one bringing questions: "How many oxen do you claim, etc", the other going in his turn to give an answer. So the two parties never see each other during this disagreeable debate about money. When they are agreed, the suitors and his friends return home and the ntjumi recieves £ 1 for his assistance. There is no other *tjekela* than this. The word tjekela is unknown in Nkuna.

The fiancée's visit. As soon as they have gone, the women of the village begin to prepare pots of beer for the lobola feast. But before this feast takes place, six days later, the girls and her friends go to the young men's village to return the visit. The fiancée has been warned by her mother to be very cautions, not to accept the proposals of her suitor too readily. Boys and girls enjoy themselves thoroughly. A goat is killed for them, a goat called *the feather* because, for the fiancée, it is as it were a feather in her hair, "a feather in her cap"!

The lobola act follows immediately. The girls have stayed three days and gone home. Six had elapsed before they came. This makes nine days, just enough for the brewing of the beer. It is prepared in the girl's village. All the suitor's family make for it, driving the herd of cattle, fifteen head strong, which is the lobola money. The sham-fight takes place, some of the invaders, the young ones, going steadily forward, the others, the adults, hiding behind the oxen and pushing them in under a shower of blows. Huts are offered to the visitors. One is

especially reserved for the great *mukonwana*, the man who has married the fiancé's sister and whose oxen are used to buy the bride of the day. He has come to see where *his* oxen go. In the evening girls choose their *shigango*. To-morrow morning they will fetch water for their ablutions. This is the day when the lobolo will be officially remitted by the one family to the other. Long discussions take place by the intermediacy of the two ntjumi at the end of which the male relations of the bride leave their hut to inspect the cattle and criticise them, the others trying to emphasise their beauty. Two oxen have been killed for the feast, one brought by the fiancé, another provided by the father of the fiancée. Dancing, singing, goes on the whole afternoon; the visitors go home at sunset, the girls accompany them and tie knots of grass where they part.

A month after the lobola ceremony, a new feast takes place called *the beer which washes the hoofs of the oxen*. The fiancée together with the women of the family, (not only the girls), brings pots of beer to the husband's village. They stay outside. When the inhabitants ask them to enter, they run back some distance and only consent to enter on being urged to do so... and so on! The fiancée does not put down the pot she carries until her suitor has brought a goat. Shillings must be given to induce her to enter the hut, to sit down, to accept water for washing her hands and food to eat. Another ox is killed and the meat is divided as follows : the liver and the heart are for the bride's father, the leg for her mother, the *nyimba*, viz. the womb, which includes the ribs, sternum etc. for the maternal uncle. The women, when they return home, take all these pieces of meat to their several adresses. They have put a skewer through the heart and liver and stick it into the ground before the bride's father's hut saying : "This is the notification of the husband's people."

If the total number of the oxen has been remitted on the lobola day, *the departure of the new wife* for the husband's kraal (tlhoma) will not be long delayed. But should there be some oxen wanting, a wise father will not allow her to go until the whole lobolo has been paid. The husband works hard to fetch

the other oxen. He brings them, without ceremony, together with one sovereign which he puts before the bride's father as a present, saying : "This is my spitting for you, my father!" He does the same for the mother. He now feels the right to claim his wife. They answer : "Give us time to prepare her trousseau". The trousseau : two mats, two or three big spoons, some pots, a wooden platter, a pestle and a mortar, one hoe provided by the maternal uncle, make up all the equipment of a Nkuna bride. All her female relations meet and, after having exhorted(1) her to be obedient, to accept all the hardships she will find in her new home, they accompany her to her husband's village. This is the *hloma*. The men do not go, except the ntjumi of the bride's family. The father, on the morning before they leave, kills a fowl and *hahla*, viz. makes a sacrifice. telling his ancestors that his daughter goes to be married and praying for her. The ntjumi immediately after his arrival, goes to the husband and to his assembled relatives and tells them roughly : "Here we are; we bring you your dog. Here it is. With us, she was reputed to be a good girl. Now we shall hear you every day say that she is lazy, does not know how to cook, has a host of lovers.... All right! Kill her! Kill your dog! Have you not bought it? She is a witch! Let her drink the magic philter, etc." The men keep silent... "Yes, you are right. We shall beat her. But if her husband is too hard on her, we will try to deliver her. We shall do our best to protect her".

In the meantime the women cut the logs of the *shigiyane*, fill the pots with water and the feast goes on, another ox having been killed by the husband. The married pair sit on a mat

(1) "Hear!" do the old women say to the bride, "you have been a good girl, so far. Henceforth you will be treated as a slave! You will be accused of adultery and of witchcraft. You will have no happiness any more. But accept all that! They shall beat you, kill you and we will not be able to deliver you, because we have eaten their oxen". These exhortations are worth reproducing as they show distinctly the conditions under which the girl goes to her husband. She is not protected by the lobolo! On the contrary, the lobolo has made her the possession of the husband's family from whom she must now accept any treatment. (See Part II).

and the women of the two families begin the mutual exchange of insults which are never wanting on that day! "You dogs!" will say one of the aunts of the girl, "people of no consequence! You have not even a broken pot to remove the ashes from the fireplace. You can congratulate yourselves on getting such a good wife as this, a hardworker, a splendid cook, a nice and honest girl." An old woman of the other party answers: "Yes! If you have exhorted her sufficiently! Perhaps she will give up her bad ways, her laziness, etc..."—"Bad ways? You can well speak about that! Look at your son! What was he? A wild beast! We have come to cut his tail and make a man of him!"

V. *Marriage by abduction.*

The several ceremonies which we have described belong to the legal marriage (ku teka, ku lobola). But there exists another way of getting a wife, and the miserable (psisiwana), those who have no oxen, no pounds sterling for lobola, especially if they have no energy, have recourse to this method. It is called *ku tluba*. A young man in such a position, wishing to marry such and such a girl, will send a friend to her and propose to her a rendez-vous in the bush. If she agrees to become his wife in this irregular manner, she goes there and meets him. They have relations together and run to one of the relatives of the girl's mother. The family of the mother will be more lenient than the family of the father, having no right to the lobolo. The transgressors of the law will probably choose the village of the maternal uncle and settle there. The parents look for their daughter everywhere and try to get her to return home. If she is quite determined to remain with her ravisher, they let her go free, deploring their misfortune and their shame. But it is rare in the primitive state of the tribe that such a marriage should not be regularised. The thief, if he has retained any feeling of decency, will try to collect the lobolo. One morning he goes to the village of his wife's parents, deposits a sovereign

or a goat or a cock on the threshold of the hut of the girl's mother ; or he hangs a half-sovereign to the goat's neck, rubs its lips with salt to prevent it from bleating, and then he shouts loudly : " We have stolen, we of such and such a clan "... People wake from their sleep, not knowing what animal has made such a noise, come out from their huts and see the culprit standing outside the fence. When he has been duly recognised, he runs away. He will perhaps bring some other presents till he has definitely " lobola " his wife. Should he not succeed in bringing the regular payment, the first girl born from that marriage will be the lobolo. "Nwana a ta lobola mamana wa kwe" : the child will pay for her mother. In law, all the children of such an union belong to the girl's family : a man who has not lobola has no right of property whatever in his children. (See Part II.)

Should the woman who has been stolen by *tlhuba* go at once to stay with her irregular husband in his village, her parents will arrange matters in another way. They will "go as enemies" (hi bulala), make a regular descent on the village of the thief, kill a pig, threaten to take all the furniture. The men of that village will then intercede and, in the course of time, the lobolo will be paid. (See App. III).

SOME REMARKS ABOUT THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE THONGA.

Though somewhat different in the various clans, the marriage customs show a strong resemblance amongst them all and differ only in details. There are three great "moments" to distinguish in the sequence of the rites : 1) the *buta,* betrothal, with the two official visits of the fiancé and the fiancée. 2) The *lobola*, remittance of the purchase money on which the two families have agreed and 3) the *hloma*, the ceremony of taking the bride to her husband's home. Some of the customs accompanying these principal acts are very strange and seem at first quite incomprehensible.

1) To understand them, we must notice that marriage in primitive or semi-civilised tribes is not an individual affair as it has become with us. It is an affair of the community. It is a kind of contract between

two groups, the husband's family and the wife's family. What is the respective position of the two groups or families ? One of the groups loses a member, the other gains one. To save itself from undue diminution, the first group claims compensation, and the second grants it under the form of the lobolo. This remittance of money, oxen or hoes, will allow the first group to acquire a new member in place of the one they have lost and so the balance will be kept. This conception of the lobola as being a compensation, a means of restoring the equilibrium between the two groups, is certainly the right one.

This need of maintaining the importance of a group, the tendency to resist a lessening of that group, accounts also for some of the other customs: all the rites which emphasise the value of the bride find their explanation there. Her flight when she is about to be taken by her husband, her delays, her reserve, all that is calculated to show how precious she is to her group: "A hi si kola ha yene", "we are not tired of her, we would gladly keep her", say her parents by means of these rites. The reciprocal insults which take place on the day of the hloma have the same origin. Relatives of the bride do their best to show the immense superiority of their own family over the other and of their daughter over her husband. The second group defends itself as well as it can : hence these challenges which sometimes end in a real fight.

The sham fight is probably to be explained in the same way. The boys, brothers of the bride, heartily thrash the brothers of the husband who dare to come and take away one of the girls of the kraal. They do not like to see their family impoverished, diminished. The old men carry the hoes and show them to the defenders of the kraal saying: "This is our ox !" Or they hide themselves amidst the cattle as claiming their protection, because this is certainly the only condition upon which the bride's clan would consent to recieve the invaders. Mr. van Gennep is right, I think, in rejecting the old explanation of the sham fight as being a remnant of the marriage by capture which would have been the primitive form of marriage amongst those tribes. The Thonga possess the marriage by abduction, but it is quite another thing as we have seen.

2) We find the explanation of some other ceremonies when we apply to them the theory of the *Rites of passage*. For both bridegroom and bride, there is indeed passage to a new condition of life. They pass from the position of single persons to that of married people. Hence the part taken by their best friends and bridesmaids from

whom they separate by their marriage. For the bride there is passage from one family to another, from one village to another. Separation and aggregation rites will consequently take place.

The *separation rites* are, on the part of the bride, her flight to the bush or to another village the day before the *hloma*, when the female relatives of the husband go and seize her by force (Mpfumo). Then the wearing a veil which the aunts of the husband take away from her in Nondwane, the song of mourning with which her friends accompany her to the conjugal dwelling.

The *aggregation rites* are first of all the common participation in the flesh of the oxen during the feasts. Nothing makes natives more friendly to each other than to eat meat together. Then the building of the wood pile, the girl's acts of civility to the husband's friends during the *tjekela* and the day after the *hloma*. These rites being collective seem to represent the union of the two families. The new wife performs them herself individually during the first week of her marriage.

How is it possible to explain the calculated resistance to acts of politeness on the part of both male and female visitors during the betrothal ceremonies and even later on? If the girls only were making difficulty in entering the village, the hut, in sitting down on mats, in drinking, in eating, etc. we should say: This rite is also, on the part of the diminished group, a means of asserting its importance, of saving its dignity. But the boys do the same thing on their visit. They maintain the same disdainful attitude... I suppose it rather arises from the fact that the two social groups look upon each other with some distrust, not yet being fully acquainted and consequently observe a mutual reserve.

* * *

What will be the fate of all these very picturesque marriage customs with the advent of civilisation? Let us notice that amongst Christian converts, many of them have been abandoned as a matter of course, the bad habits of tjekela, the assault on the village, the preparation of beer for instance. The part played by adult go-betweens is sometimes taken by the elders of the Church, but often young people do not care for interference and conduct their own business.

The *lobola custom* is opposed by the missionnaries but natives generally fail to see its evil. We shall come back to this great subject later on when dealing with the life of the family. Some other rites are preserv-

ed, the feast, of course, and we see boys ruining themselves in order to prepare a glorious wedding with splendid costumes and abundance of meat. On this point they are rather too conservative!

The religious act has now become the Christian blessing and has taken the place of the heathen sacrifice to the ancestors; it is followed generally by a procession of the best men and the bridesmaids who sing popular hymns, sometimes very solemnly worded, songs of repentance for instance, as they march to and fro in the nuptial village, the women, even the men, of the two families throwing at each other's heads amenities of the same kind as in former times. This is a most peculiar mixture of the old and the new elements and often made us wonder (See Zidji, p. 212). I think however that these rites are doomed to fall, because Christian marriage is no longer a collective act, but has been individualised as well as the many other acts of the psychic life. It remains a social act indeed, but an act accomplished by two individuals on their own responsibility and by mutual love. "Ceci tuera cela": This, the Christian or Western individualism, will kill that, viz. the primitive collectivism and all its rites. However original and interesting the marriage ceremonies may be amongst the Bantu, I do not think they can be as such assimilated to the new ideal. Let that ideal inspire new customs befitting its own nature as well as the merry character of the race!

Here are some answers to the questions of Professor Frazer on marriage:

A man always brings his wife to his own home. This is the *tlhoma* and it is a law. It is taboo for him to go and live with his parents-in- law, at any rate when he marries his first wife. In the course of time, when the children have grown, when the *bukonwana* viz. the relations with parents-in-law are old, a man can go and live in his wife's village (See Part II). Another case in which this can be done is when a widow refuses to marry the man who legally inherits her and gives herself to a stranger, a man of Inhambane, for instance. He does not pay the lobolo, lives with her in her village; but the children born of that union will belong to the family of the deceased husband.

There is no preparation to the marriage by fasting, bleeding or keeping awake the night before, amongst the Thonga. No corn, nor rice is thrown on the wedding pair. The bride or bridegroom are never represented at the marriage by a proxy or a dummy. Conjugal relations begin just after marriage (see page 113), but the wife does not

possess her home and her kitchen for the first year; during that period: she must cook for her mother-in-law.

There are no occasions on which men exchange their wives.

E. MATURE AGE.

1. *The Bantu Ideal.*

The married man is called "he who has his home" (a ni le kwakwe) in opposition to the single man (nkhwenda). But let us say at once that the kind of individual called bachelor does not abound amongst the Bantu. The wretched, the invalids, the weak-minded only, are deprived of the legal marriage which for the black man is and remains the one object in life. It is through his wife and children that he becomes somebody in the society. This fact does not as yet appear during the first year of wedlock, for the newly married woman must cook at the fireplace of her mother-in-law. She is hardly more than a servant during a whole year; she does not possess her own pot, and it must be so because she does not yet eat the mealies of her own garden, having ploughed her fields in her former domicile the previous year. Her husband eats with her. He is not yet a lord. But if he is rich, if he is the heir of an important man, he will not be long in buying a second and third wife.

These new marriages will be contracted as the first one but with less pomp. It even happens that the feast may be held in the husband's village, if he has become middle aged and is at his fifth or sixth wedding.

For each new wife, he will huild a hut. He has begun his village when building the house of his first wife, the great wife, (nsati lwe nkulu) as she is called, she who will remain the principal one whatever may happen. While, without compass, he was drawing on the ground with the marvellous instinct of the South African native, the circumference of the circle on

which the patched reed walls of his dwelling were to rise, while he was covering this circular wall with a conical roof, he was saying to himself: "I establish my home; I inaugurate my village". During the following years, the aim of his life will be to complete little by little another wider circle... When he has bought his second wife, he will also build for her a hut of the same type. But this second hut, the third, and the fourth which may come afterwards, will not be erected in a straight row like a street. They will form an arc which will be prolonged so as to constitute first a semi-circle then a complete circle, if a sufficient number of buildings are added. This is the ideal of the black man : to become the lord and master of a complete circular village. Most of the men do not reach this ideal. Three or four huts, a wretched quarter of a circle is all to which they attain! Some better armed for the struggle of life, or more favoured by circumstances close their circle. Their cattle, for which they have also built a circular enclosure, right in the middle of the square of the village, multiply and are not carried of by peripneumonia and hematuria which, in their countries, decimate so many herds! Every three years, theirs wives bear children. If these are boys, it is an honour: the village will not lack heirs, neither will the father lack arms to help and to defend him! If they are girls, it means wealth : oxen will come to the family! Their brothers will not lack wives, for the sisters will be sold to provide for the brothers! Meanwhile, the huts are erected, large and small, the one of the head of the family being the largest, the *malao*, those of the boys, the least well kept.

Let us look at a Ronga favoured by fate, as was Gidja, of the country of Libombo, near Rikatla. His village numbered not less than twenty-four huts, with beautiful shady trees behind; notice the enclosure for the cattle and for the goats on the central place, that for the pigs behind the houses.... There are cocks and hens pecking about everywhere, dogs wandering around in search of someting to steal, for they receive hardly any food; a crowd of youngsters leading the cattle, and everywhere the noise of the pestles crushing the daily mealies in the large

mortars. He walks about proudly in his favoured enclosure, looking with pleasure on his prosperity. Young men are ready to do the work he will give them to do. He will treat them with beer brewed by his wives. And often the people of the neighbouring villages will join his people for dances and games

Phot. H. Gross

Ndjakandjaka, a headman of Spelonken, with his men.

on the fine square which is surrounded and enclosed on all sides by huts.

And, above all things, in the evening, each of his wives will bring him the pot which she has cooked for him. This is the essential matrimonial duty of the wife. Not one will fail in it. Gidja, the lord of six or seven pots of mealies seasoned with a sauce of monkey nuts, will feast and be satiated (shura) every day, and that means much, for the inner capacity of a Thonga is something wonderful.

He will become large and stout, quite shining, which in South Africa is a sure sign of wealth and nobility. The stouter he gets the more he will be respected. But it is easy to conceive that he cannot empty by himself all these pots amidst which he is reigning. He treats his children, but others come to pay him visits at that evening hour when they know him to be surrounded by so many good things! The sycophants are not wanting! "Good evening, son of so and so!" do they say. "You are one of the great men of the country". And to answer these and other compliments, the magnanimous Gidja shares his feast with his admirers!

Strangers are crossing the country and inquire where they could be recieved? "Go to Gidja" they are told. "A ni tshengwe, a fuya tshengwe" viz. "he is the possessor of a harem!" He is not killed by famine! He has beer to drink every day! He can give food to poor people. Even then, some of it remains in the plate and is eaten by little boys and dogs on the square. There is always abundance there. And the travellers come and enter (khuleka) his village, after which they will tell in their homes the story of the magnificence of Gidja and will extol his hospitality.

Thus the man who has succeeded in life becomes famous, his advice will carry weight in the discussions in which he takes part; he will perhaps be even more esteemed than the chief himself, though he has not the special prestige which the royal family owes to the blood which runs in its veins.

Conclusion: the greatness of an African is before all a matter of pots and the matter of pots is closely connected with polygamy!

During these years of mature age the evolution of a man is not marked by special ceremonies. There is one custom however which is common to all and which means a progress in their social position. It is that of fixing the wax ring.

II. *Fixing the wax ring.*

With the South Africans, the crown is not the apanage of royalty. All men having reached mature age, have the right to adorn themselves with it! It is true, it is not a diadem of precious stones, but a large ring of wax. This custom seems to have a Zulu origin. The Ba-Suto do not know it and the Ba-Thonga, who all practise it, have taken it from the conquering tribe which owes its fortune to the famous Chaka. This habit has spread all over the country from Maputju to the borders of Gaza, but only during the last ninety years. This black crown is called *ngiyana* (Ro.) or *shidlodlo* (Dj.), and the crowning ceremony is called *khehla*. From that verb has come the term *makhehla*, a name given to all those who wear this ornament.

This ceremony is accomplished in the following way: At a given time, the chief informs all the men of a certain age that they must prepare their rings. The counsellors and the sons of the royal family who belong to this "class" must go to the capital. Several oxen are killed; the back tendons are carefully kept and made into strings. This being done, the master hair-dressers, that is to say those who know how to fix these strange appendices, are called in.

They come, supplied with small sticks (tinhlamalala, the nervures of the leaves of the milala palm-tree) which they plait together with these strings of tendons so as to form the skeleton, the circular frame of the crown. The strings drawn through the curly hair, all around the head, fix the frame of the crown securely above the temples. The remaining hair on the sides and behind has heen previously shaven. The chief possesses a provision of wax: the wax which is preferred is not that of the bees but the rosy secretion of certain grubs which is found on some bushes and which the young boys of the capital go and pick. This wax is mixed with different ingredients to make it black. It is fixed on the frame of sticks and shaped into a large round or oval ring, as black as jet, and which can be

made to shine brightly. When all is done, they eat the flesh of the oxen, they enjoy themselves, they dance and solemnize this great occasion!

The more humble subjects crown themselves in their own villages where tonsorial artists come to adorn them. The poor go to the hair dresser and they do not use strings of tendons (they have no ox to kill), but strings which are made from the fibres of a palm-tree; it is cheaper. It is said that nowadays the strings of palm-tree (bukuha) have nearly entirely supplanted the others, the more so as they are not spoilt by the washing of the crown; whilst, if the *ngiyana* is fixed with tendons, no water must fall on it, or it would soften.

Moreover the crown must be taken care of; it can be spoilt and deformed by a blow or when its owner goes through thorny bushes. A *khehla* who has some self-respect will often polish and repair this valuable ornament, for it is a sign of the mature age. He who has been ordered by the chief to wear it carries no more burdens on his head: his crown would be spoilt! He will be accompanied by a boy who carries his parcels; he himself will only carry his stick or his assagay. He will at once be known as one of the mature men of the tribe. This is not to say that the mere fact of wearing the *ngiyana* gives the right of mixing in the important affairs of the country: the cousellors alone possess this right; but it is amongst the "crowned", that will be chosen the man who will be sent to another chief to treat political questions, for instance.

When the hair grows (for, though it is curly, it can become long), the crown rises with it and becomes more or less unsteady, which must be most uncomfortable! The best thing would be to cut the ornament off and then replace it. Mr. Mandjia, one of our neighbours of Rikatla, was probably too lazy to undertake this job so he put a small red handkerchief between his skull and the crown to prevent its swaying.

At a given time all the *ngiyana* disappeared from the land of Nondwane. The chief Mapunga was dead! The mourning, kept secret for a year, had been made public and the law requires all the mature men to take off their crowns when the sovereign of the

country is defunct. They take the wax from the frame, make a ball of it which they fix on a little stick, and put this stick in the roof of their hut above the door. The frame is hung up quite close by, and they leave these things remaining there till the new chief orders his subjects to remake their crowns. This shows clearly that the crowning custom is in close relation with the national life of the tribe. The "makhehla" form also special battalions in the army.

Nowadays, however, this custom is not kept as religiously as in bygone times. Life is harder, one must go and earn pounds sterling in the port of Lourenço Marques, or in the gold mines, and one can no longer indulge in a lazy life! It may therefore happen that a poor man will refuse to wear the crown, and say to his chief: "What shall I eat? Will you feed me? Must I not carry burdens on my head? I do not know what to do with the ngiyana". — "Tiko dji bolile," say the old people shaking their heads. "A ke he na nao", that is to say: "the country is falling into decay, going to the dogs. There is no law any more"... Oh! the good old times!

F. OLD AGE

The man however grows older, older. His hair and his beard turn white, the wrinkles deepen on his face. He stoops. His skin no longer shines with health and corpulence. His wives die and his glory fades. His crown loses the lustre of bygone times. When a branch scratches it, when a knock spoils it, he has not a shilling to pay the repairer! He is forsaken. He is less respected and often only a burden unwillingly supported. The children laugh at him. If the cook sends them to carry to the lonely grandfather his share of food in his leaky old hut, the young rascals are capable of eating it on the way and of depriving the old man of his food, pretending afterwards that they had done what they were told! And when, between two huts, under shelter of the hedge of reeds, he warms his round-

shouldered back in the rays of the setting sun, remaining there quite weighed down by his years, lost in some senile dream, they point at the decrepit form and say to each other : " He! Shikhunkununu ! " — " It is the bogey-man, the ogre ! "

People of mature age show scarcely more consideration for old people than do the young ones. Lately in the district of Matjolo, an old man and an old woman, Kobole and Minyokwana, were forsaken by their children who were moving to another part of the country. They were left in a miserable shed, merely a roof supported by some poles without any reeds to close in the wall. Some compassionate souls took pity on these poor wretched people, who had fallen into second childhood and did not even know what they were saying!

In times of war, old people die in great numbers! During the moments of panic, they are hidden in the wood, in the swamps of palm-trees, while all the able-bodied population run away. They are killed by the enemy who spare no one (it is the law of war), or they die in their hiding places of misery and hunger!

As may be seen the eve of life is very sad for the poor Thonga! There are however children who, to the end, show much devotion to their parents. Those who are the most to be pitied are they which fall to the charge of remote nephews or cousins. They can only repeat in a broken voice the sad refrain : " Ba hi shanisa ! " — " They treat us very badly ! "

G. DEATH

I. *The last days.*

Manyibane, the headman of a big village near Rikatla, is dangerously ill. The men of his kraal, his friends, have come to inquire about the disease (kamba shinyonga) and have learned that it is serious. They issue this order to all the

inhabitants : "Tlulan psilawen!" — "Keep each of you in his sleeping place, (viz. the men to the right of the hut, the women to the left) and have no relations anymore. It is taboo! The man would die!" Should visitors come, they are not allowed to enter the village. They must have kept "pure" for two days at least. Two sticks are planted on either side of the door of the hut and a third one put over them so as to close the entrance. "It is the way black people have of making their proclamation," says Mboza. "Everybody will know that a dying man is there and nobody will come in." Should another man have had relations with the same woman as the patient, he is doubly prohibited from seeing him, because the patient would break into perspiration and die at once. This is the great law of *matlulana*, as we shall see.

Of course the *nganga* (doctor) has been called already. He has tried his best. The bone-thrower also! He has discovered perhaps that the disease was due to a wizard. He has found him out by his art! The suspected one is called and solemnly ordered to heal the patient. He is shut up in the hut with him and he must recall his deadly spells and restore the man to health. But this has not succeeded, any more than the doctor's drugs!

The dying man calls together all his relations and expresses his last wishes before them : "Somebody has not come; go and fetch him" he says. When they are all present, he says to them : "All right, my brethren, my children. I wanted to see you before dying. I wanted you, especially so and so, who has been so good to me. The others hated me; you always did show me love. Henceforth I entrust to you the care of my people." He will probably designate his successor, the one who is to be the great one (nkulukumba), and recommend the others to obey to him.

Then he reminds them about his debts, those he owes and those which are owing to him. "So and so has lobola our daughter and has not payed all the oxen..." He reveals to them also the place where he has buried some treasure. "Go to such a place, in such a hut, and you will find it." He

does not say a word about his wives and about their future, as those questions will be settled according to the laws relating to widows which are well known.

When the breathing becomes shorter, those who watch over him begin to *bend his limbs* (ku khondla psiro (Ro.); ku putja (Dj.). This is a very old custom and it is deemed so important that the operation begins before death, lest the rigidity of the body should prevent it from being accomplished. When the bending of the limbs had been too long delayed, it has sometimes been necessary to break them. To avoid this uncomfortable eventuality, one may see those attending to the dying man taking his hands gently and bringing them near to his chin, and folding his legs against his body. When asked why they do so, they will say : "It is the law. This is the way of caring for the dead (bekisa)". Or : "It is in order to have smaller graves to dig..." But I do not think this utilitarian reason to be the true one. Amongst the Ba-Ronga where graves are dug in the soft sand, there would be no difficulty at all in making a larger hole.

Some ethnographers have adopted the "embryonic explanation" to account for this custom which is spread all through primitive humanity, from the Mousterian age down to the first inhabitants of Egypt, and amongst a great many uncivilised tribes all over the earth. (1) They say : "The primitive man has given the corpse the attittude of the child before its birth because they believed that death is but a new birth, the begining of a new life..." I asked Viguet if he thought this to be the true original explanation. He told me he did not know, he would not deny it. But there is a fact which prevents its acceptance : the Thonga have never made any dissection and ignore the position of the foetus in the womb. So do probably all the primitive folk. That kind of knowledge has come much later in the evolution of mankind. The intention of this rite is more probably to put a dying man in the sitting position which a Thonga generally adopts when in his hut, as the grave is *but a hut in the earth* and he is meant

(1) See my paper in *Anthropos* Sept. 1910. "Two burials at twenty thousand years distance."

to continue his life in it exactly as before. All the other burial rites confirm this explanation, as we shall see.

Manyibane is dead... In some districts they see that he does not die with *closed hands*. It is taboo because then the children of the dead will quarrel (Viguet). They close his eyes, they take away all his clothes. In the Mpfumo clan, they *wash the body*. Afterwards they cover him with an old rug. No one cries. Lamentations are absolutely prohibited before the burial is accomplished : it is taboo It would " break the back " of the men who have to perform the funeral rites.

Should there be *strangers* in the village when the death takes place, they will run away quickly to avoid defilement; otherwise they would have to take part in all the purifying ceremonies of the following days.

Without delay, the *fire* which was burning in the funeral hut is removed and carried on to the square. It must be carefully kept alight. This is a taboo. Should there be rain, it must be protected. All the inhabitants must use this fire during the next five days. It will be put out by the doctor, with sand or water, on the day of the dispersion of the mourners. He will then light a new one and everyone will take from it embers to kindle his own fire in the different huts. It is one of the conditions of the purification of the village.

The same day young people are sent to all the relatives in the neighbourhood to announce the death. Even the relations who are absent far away, in Johannesburg, must be informed, and it is done in this way : Someone takes a handful of grass, lights it and, when it is on fire, throws it in the direction of the absent one saying : " Your brother, here, is dead. Do not fear. Let your enemies (viz. your White employers) have consideration and love for you, that you may find sleep and health ".

II. *The grave.*

The men of the village then go out and dig the grave. They choose a place behind the hut of the deceased or somewhere further in the little forest which generally surrounds the village; or in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood, if he were one of the guardians of the forest, one belonging to the elder branch of the family.

First of all they see that a tree be near the grave on which to hang some of the belongings of the deceased (those which will be kept but will have to be purified); they dig a hole of about six feet in length, four in width, and two and half or three deep. This first hole can be dug with ordinary hoes. Then, at the side of it, they excavate a second hole, more or less circular in form, using for this a light wooden board, generally the border of an old basket. The sides of this hole are well smoothed by means of this instrument. In the Northern clans they sometimes smear it with mud taken from the river; they also put one reed besides the corpse, and grass, which grew in water, is spread the bottom of the grave. (1) So the grave is, in a way, double. It presents two levels : the higher one, the large hole, which gives access to the smaller one, the circular ovoid grave. The first is called *the square* (hubo) of the deceased, the second one is *his hut* (yindlu or shinyatu). He will dwell in the hut, but come out from it and sit on his square underground, just as he was doing when living in his village. (2) (Elias.)

When the grave has been duly dug, the diggers call the relatives to inspect their work, and show them that their deceased relation has been well cared for. The lower grave,

(1) Compare this custom with the rite of burying little children and twins in a wet soil.

(2) In some clans of the North there is only one hole and no excavation on the side. But what I have described here is the rule amongst the Ba-Ronga, except when civilisation has already altered the old custom.

being excavated in the wall of the higher one, forms a kind of vault. It seems as if it were considered necessary that the earth which will protect the head must not be disturbed. When all the mourners have come, at the call of the diggers, it sometimes happens that the vault of the grave falls in. It is a very bad sign. The cause of the accident is this : either the person who has bewitched the deceased is present or, amongst the assistants, there is one who has been guilty of " matlulana " against him ! (1) The grave is a *mondjo*, a magical means of divination.

III. *The burial.*

The diggers can be four in number, but they are generally only two : the master of the mourning (nwinyi wa nkosi), who is the brother next to the deceased, and another younger near relative, for instance a son. Both must be married, because married people alone can get rid of the defilement of death by the " lahla khombo ", which we shall explain later. Should an unmarried son be asked to undertake the work of burying, he would answer : " How can you propose to me such a thing ? Am I not immature (mbisi, properly raw) ? I am not yet ripe ! Is defilement of death not there ? With whom could I wash it away ? " (Viguet). The first digger is also called " the one of the head ", the second, " the one of the feet ", because one of them will carry the corpse by the head, the other by the feet. Women can also bury a corpse occasionally.

So the grave-diggers go back to the hut an begin to wrap the corpse in his rugs and in his mat (ku tjimba). They stitch

(1) On this point Mboza and Elias did not agree. Mboza said the falling of the grave can only be caused by the presence of the wizard who killed the deceased. Elias asserts that the same accident happens if some of the assistants has *tjemakanya* the deceased, viz. crossed his way, that is to say has had sexual relations with the same woman as the deceased. (This is matlulana). As the hut of the deceased knew this man, so his new hut in the ground recognises and reveals him !

the mat twice (to prevent it from slipping ?) (Viguet). They wait generally till sunset to perform the burial. When the time has come, they bore the wall of the hut on the right side, as the husband dwells in the right half of the house, the wife in the left half. The corpse must not be carried out of the hut by the door but by that artificial opening. (1) So he leaves the hut, head foremost. (2) They sometimes close their noses with leaves of a bush called ngupfana, which has a strong scent, in order not to perceive the smell of death (moya wa lifu). They march slowly, without a word, men and women following them silently. The " one of the head " goes down into the first level, the one of the feet follows him. They have already put at the place of the head a piece of wood, a piece of branch of a *nkanye*, their sacred tree, one foot long and three inches broad, to be used as a pillow. At the bottom, on the soil, they stretch some old rugs. They lay the corpse down (3) on the left side, the head on the pillow. The grave has been dug in such a way that its long axis is directed towards that cardinal point whence the ancestors came, so that the deceased, having the head slightly bent backwards, is meant to look in that direction. (4) Now they take away from the deceased all those rugs in which they had wrapped him, they cut them through the middle with a knife, making a large opening in each of them as well as in the mats, also in the pieces of clothing which have all been brought and which

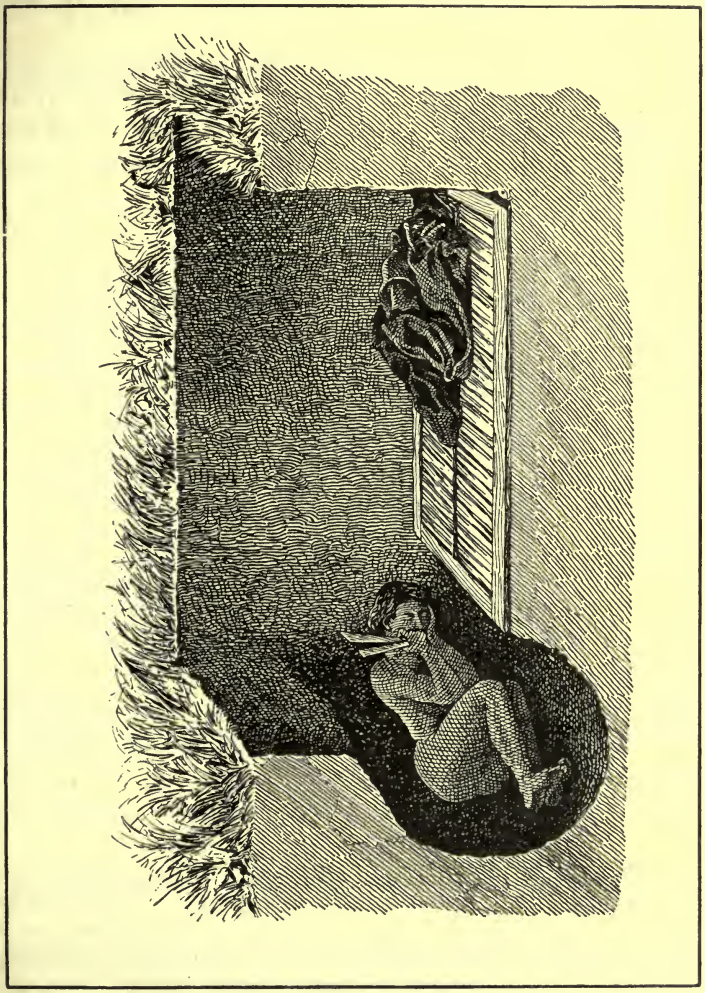
(1) In the Hlabi clans, the corpse is carried through the door, but the plaster on both sides of the door (marimba) is beaten and falls down. It will be repaired later on. In the Northern clans the hut of the deceased is not taboed so strongly as amongst the Ba-Ronga When it has been purified it will be used again.

(2) Compared Ethnography : In Switzerland it is a common saying that a corpse must leave the house the feet foremost.

(3) The Ba-Ngoni put their dead in the grave in the sitting position, a knife in the hand, as it is a race of murderers ! (Viguet). It may be that the reclined position given to the corpse by the Ba-Ronga, is the result of an evolution. At any rate, this is not the proper sleeping position, as natives generally do not bend their limbs when sleeping.

(4) I attended one day, on December 17th 1908, the burial of one of my neighbours of Rikatla, called Sokis, and described the rites which I witnessed that day in the paper already quoted, published by *Anthropos*, September 1910.

must be thrown away in the grave. " Everything must *hefemula*, breath its last, just the same as the deceased, said Spoon. It is taboo". No iron must be put into the grave. Iron, black iron



Drawn by Cl. Heaton and reproduced from « Anthropos ».

A Ronga in his grave.

is *ndjoba*; it is dangerous for the deceased, because it does not decay as quickly as the corpse, the rugs and the mats... It must not be buried. Copper and brass still less ! Because it

does not even change colour. " These would call Death to the village because they remain shining; they would shine for Death and point out other people of the kraal saying: Kill! " (Viguet). Copper, brass bracelets as well as white snuff boxes are called *nhlale* not *ndjoba*. (1)

It is interesting to notice how the different belongings of the dead are dealt with, and where they are put. There are two categories. Some must disappear with the deceased, some will be kept.

To the first category belong before all his rugs; they are wrapped round his body. He sleeps in them; they must not be tied however, because it is taboo to tie a corpse; the spirit, *shikwembu*, would become angry at being imprisoned and would cause evil. (2) The mats are spread in the first hole, as well as the old jackets and trousers, because there the deceased will come and sit on them, when he gets out of his hut to rest on his square. The earthen pots, especially the old ones, are broken on the grave afterwards " to show anger against death " (Elias). The mug, which is one of them, may be occasionally put on the grave, pierced at the bottom, and offerings of beer will be poured into it later on for the dead. All these perishables are to die with him. They are called his filth (thyaka ra yena). Objects of the first category are sometimes burnt in the Northern clans.

The second category includes the articles which are preserved as having still some value; they will be hung on the tree, or at the foot of the tree near the grave, or in front of the abandoned hut, and will be duly purified during the next few days, as we shall see. Good baskets, new pots, assagais, (3)

(1) It is sometimes a matter of discussion to know what is *ndjoba* and what is not. I have seen the digger tear off the buttons from the trousers of Sokis, when he was cutting them through, and throw them out of the grave. An old woman thinking perhaps that they were not of such an incorruptible nature as iron, put them in again and again he threw them out.

(2) It seems even that no knot must enter a grave. Two bits of skin tied together and forming the clothing of Sokis round his loins were first untied and then thrown into the grave.

(3) The blade but not the handle, which is comprised in his " filth " and which is broken. " The handle is *he*, the blade is not *he* ".

knives, hoes etc., belong to the second category. They will be distributed afterwards amongst the heirs. In the Northern clans, seeds taken from the store of the deceased are sometimes thrown also in the grave with the words : " Go with your seeds ".

But let us return to the burial : the " one of the head "

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THE GRAVE OF SOKIS, A MAN OF RIKATLA.

(Sokis, being an exorcist, a little hut has been built on his grave).

officiates in the grave. Then all the relations help him to fill the hole. They push the sandy soil with their hands. With great care they remove every piece of root, as if to make the sand perfectly clean. It is a taboo dictated by respect for the deceased. To do otherwise would mean " to throw him away " (tshukumeta). The head has been covered with a towel and

the earth is brought near it very gently. Now the digger takes two twigs, from the branch of a male nkanye (the nkanye is a dioecious vegetable) and puts them into the right hand of the deceased, which is seen emerging from the rugs near his cheek. When the earth reaches the level of this arm, it is slowly extended so as to cause the two twigs to emerge. This process of extension goes on as long as it is possible to draw the arm outwards, the hole being gradually filled in. When the arm is fully extended, the digger clutches (wutla) one of the twigs and gives it to one of his helpers who keeps it; the second one remains in the hand of the deceased. Such is, at any rate, the regular way of performing the *rite of the twig*. But often one twig only is put in the hand and it is taken away as soon as the earth reaches it, without extension of the arm; or it is made to emerge from the sand by gently pulling all the time, till the grave is filled in, so that, when the tumulus is formed, the end of the twig is still to be seen. The younger brother will then take it to perform the religious rite. The twig is called the *mbamba*, a word which we translate generally by offering, but which designates any object by means of which men enter into relation with the spirits of the ancestors. The officiating sits at the foot of the tumulus. All the people are sitting round the grave silently, the men nearer, the women farther off. He holds the twig with the right hand and turns it round his head, making circular figures in the air. Then he pronounces the sacramental syllable *Tsu, tsu, tsu*, two or three times, prolonging the sound; he has called the spirits. He prays: "You, my ancestors, who are assembled to day... Do you not see this? You have taken him.. I am alone now. I am dead! I pray you, who are yonder (kolaho), as he has gone back to you, that we may remain in peace. He did not leave us in anger. Let us mourn him gently, in peace. Let us help each other to mourn him well, even our parents-in-law from amongst whom he has taken his wife." It may be that he forgets to say something which ought to be said; then some of his hearers remind him quietly of the omission and he adds the words to his prayer.

The wailing (ku djila nkosi). As soon as he has finished praying, the assistants commence crying. The wailing begins. The women get on their feet and shout loudly, throwing themselves on the ground. The wife of the deceased cries more than any one else : "I have remained alone in the lonely plain (libalen). Where did you go? You have left me." The wailing generally starts on a very high note and finishes a little lower, expressing the pain of the heart in a touching, penetrating manner. Here is one of these sentences which can hardly be called a song. I heard it in 1893 at the burial of a young woman who was found drowned in the lake of Rikatla.

O my mother! O my mother! You have left me, where did you go ?! (1)

The parents-in-law lament over their daughter, the new widow. Everybody then begins to lament over his own relations who have died recently. The brothers weep together without shouting. They say: "You have gone first. We shall follow you soon, because there is attraction in death".

It is during the mourning that pots, handles of assagais etc. are broken over the grave.

Let us stop a little while at this point.

We have seen enough already to notice that, for the Thonga, death (lifu) is not only a sad event, a great cause of pain on account of the bereavement, but a fearful contaminating power which puts all objects, all people which were in the neighbourhood of the deceased, all his relatives, even those dwelling far away, working in Johannesburg for instance, in a condition of uncleanness. This uncleanness is very dangerous indeed. It kills, if not properly treated. All are not affected in the same way. There are concentric circles round the deceased : the widows are the inner circle and will undergo a very rigorous purification ; the grave diggers come next ; then the inhabitants of the bereaved village, the relations residing in other villages, even the relatives of the wives of the deceased. All these being unclean are put out of the pale of society : " Muti wu tjumile", " the village is dark", is the technical expression. This marginal period lasts longer for

(1) See for the notes of this song : *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 50.

those who are more affected : one year and more for the widows, one month for the village, five or six days only for the mourners from outside. But there are many taboos in connexion with this period. Sexual relations are severely prohibited amongst married people, but the *gangisa* is not so strongly objected to, at any rate in some districts. We shall also meet with the aggregation rites by which reintegration into the ordinary way of life will be secured. The funeral rites may last for one year and are very complex. There are three great moments in the sequence of these rites : 1) *The Great Mourning* which lasts a few days, just after the burial, generally only five days. Here the purification is essentially medical and aims at cleansing the persons and the objects which were directly in contact with the deceased. 2) *The sexual rites* which tend to purify the collective life of the village by the removal of its defilement. 3) *The familial rites,* consisting in gatherings of all the relatives and accompanied by religious ceremonies. These seem to aim at restoring the life of the family, viz. of the social group, which has been diminished by the death of one of its members.

This general sequence is found in all the clans. But the rites themselves differ greatly ; these differences I shall try to depict clearly. My information is more complete as regards the Ronga clans, but I owe to Viguet some entirely new and very interesting material regarding the Hlabi rites.

IV. *The Great Mourning of the first five days.*

1) The Great Mourning amongst the Ba-Ronga.

Just after the burial, all the inhabitants of the village go to the lake or the river to bathe. The grave-diggers nibble a *ndjao,* the root of a reed which has magical power. Special rites will then be performed for the widows. We shall describe them in the next chapter. When they come back from the pool, one of the men climbs on the hut and removes from its top the crown of woven grass, which was its glory during the life of its master. The hut participates in the general state of uncleanness of all his belongings. This crown will be put before the door to close it, and no one will dare to enter any more till the day of the crushing of the hut.

In the Mpufmo clans, that first êvening, the grave diggers have some preliminary purification rites to go through: 1) a *hondla*, viz. an ablution with leaves of the nkuhlu tree which have been crushed in a mortar with some water. 2) In former times they used to make a pipe with the shell of a raw sala, place in it an ember and a little hen's dung, and *smoke* this disgusting mixture.

From that first day, the grave diggers and the widows, when eating, must use special spoons *(psihanti)* made from old broken calabashes. It is taboo for them to take the food with their fingers in the common plate during the five days of the Great Mourning.

The night has come. All the widows sleep in the open, their huts, which belonged to the deceased, being taboo. If it rains, they sleep in the other huts of the village.

On the following day, the *doctor* comes and he begins to proceed with the medical purification of the widows and of the grave-diggers. This will consist in three successive *vapour bathes*, on the first, the third and the fifth day after death. These *mahungulo* are administered in the same way as the one I have already described in connection with the infantile rites (p. 52). But the drugs boiled in the pot and the pills burnt in the fire are considered very powerful, especially those of the first day, so much so that the pot in which they have been prepared must be broken on the grave. The two grave-diggers and the first widow must be exposed together to this particularly powerful desinfectant, the widow keeping her old clothing during the operation. The second and third bath, those provided for the other widows, are not so strong and the pot can be kept. In these the widow does not enter together with the grave-diggers. These rites as well as the obligation of using special spoons, refer only to the diggers and the widows.

Other rites must be performed by the whole community.

First the *cutting of the hair*, which must be complete for the widows and the near relations. Men sometimes cut only one strand on each side, women cut from the forehead to the nape of the neck. The operation is performed either by the doctor

or by anybody who is familiar with it, and the instrument used is either an iron razor or a bit of glass. They say this shaving is an act of respect for the dead, also a sign of sadness and a means of preventing the *mayiha*, the impression of the hair standing on end from fear of death. Should mourners forget to cut their hair, they might lose their heads, and become delirious (hahama).

Then they put on *malopa*, viz, pieces of a dark blue cotton cloth which have been used for a long time amongst the Ba-Ronga. The first widow must have them before she enters the enclosure of the second vapour bath.

A third general rite is the *luma milomo*, the purification of the food of the deceased. This is not a medicinal operation, but it seems that, by this act, every relative removes for himself the danger which is in the contaminated food. The word *luma* which we shall often find in the Thonga ritual means originally to bite (like a dog) or to cause violent, internal pain (colics or pains of labour). But in the ritual terminology it means to accomplish certain rites in relation with some given food in order to remove the danger which is attached to it. The *milomo* are some seeds of each kind of cereal which the deceased had in his storehouses. Some beans, grains of maize, kaffir corn, kaffir peas, etc., are cooked and poured into one of the baskets (lihlelo) of the deceased. The *ntukulu*, viz. the uterine nephew, the son of the sister of the deceased, is first called. It is he who must begin the rite and this is so important that, when people go to pay their mourning visit, they always take with them a girl or a boy who is a " ntukulu " of the one they mourn. The child stands before the pot, his feet together. The master of the mourning, (in this case, the first widow) kneels before him, takes a few drops from the pot, some of the cooked food which remains at the bottom, and pours this between his great toes. He bends his body and rubs the two great toes against one another. Then he turns his back to the place and goes away. He must not look behind: it is taboo. Then the other relatives say: "Let us all go and *luma milomo.*" He has given them the right to do so.

A little of the *milomo* is carefully kept in a pot for months.

When relatives who were absent on the day of the death come back from Johannesburg or from elsewhere, they must perform this ceremony before entering the village and eating any food in it. "Ba yila muti" — "they are taboo to the village". The rule applies only to relatives. Other people may very well eat from the deceased's store of food without any harm, as its contamination is dangerous only for his family. Another variety of this rite consists in preparing light beer with the mealies of the dead and first taking one mouthful which must be spat out on the right side, then a second one on the left side, after which one is allowed to drink.

The *gardens* of the deceased must also be purified, and this is done by the rite called *baninga mabele*, to give light to the mealies. The widows and all the female relatives go to his fields holding an old and empty *shikutja*. The shikutja is the hard shell of a sala fruit, the size of an orange, in which has been kept the provision of vegetable *tihuhlu* fat (see Part IV) and which is impregnated with it still. The women set fire to it and walk through the gardens holding it up and illuminating the fields. This is perhaps in relation to the idea that death means darkness, and that its contamination is "black" (ntima) so long as the cleansing has not taken place.

During the five days of the great mourning, relatives and friends come to pay the *official mourning visit*. (1) They enter the village, the women shouting their lamentations (mikulungwana). Some one leads them to the grave and they walk round it uttering cries of mourning, taking leave of the deceased. At the burial of Sokis, I heard a woman saying with a trembling voice: "Good-bye! You have gone! Do not forget us. Remember Mulalen". Mulalen was Sokis' little daughter. They bring with them presents, five hundred reis, a hen, a goat, some light beer, perhaps a mat for the widow because hers has been thrown away or a piece of mourning cloth. The inhabitants receive them politely, spread mats on the ground for them.

(1) This visit can be paid one, two, or three months later on, because, as they say, "nkosi a psi boli", — "the mourning does not get rotten".. But it is only during the five days that dances take place.

They tell each other the news (djungulisana). Then after having *luma*, they eat and drink. The Ba-Ronga have their drink all prepared: it is the red wine which Banyan merchants sell to them all over the country. The visitors get drunk. They dance, and the mourning ceremony turns out to be an orgy with dances and songs of all kinds. The singing, during this great mourning, consists either of war songs executed by the men and which are very impressive, or of ordinary dancing songs, the licentious ones being particularly appropriate and being performed by women. (Note 7). In fact they are the proper mourning songs, the ones which are specially chosen when one wishes duly to lament a great man. I have witnessed these performances at a mourning ceremony of the "breaking of the hut" and shall refer to this subject again. In "*Les Ba-Ronga*" (p. 53), I have quoted some of the mourning songs which have a peculiar stoic character. Here are two others from a collection made by Mrs Audéoud, the wife of one of our missionaries. They were sung at the death of the chief Tshutsha, near Makulane in the Maputju country. One of these was a war song accompanied with drums. It sounded as follows:

The other is a curious apostrophe to the wizards who were believed to have bewitched the deceased and means: "Good bye, wizard! Good bye, wizard! You will kill people. You come to kill people, you come during the night."

But the *closing day* arrives at last, the *day of the sprinkling* (shuba). When the grave-diggers have well perspired in their vapour bath, the doctor takes the pot in which the medicine is still boiling. All the women sit down with their children on their backs, the men stand in a line, holding their assagais and sticks in their hands. The doctor sprinkles his decoction over them all with a branch covered with leaves. The children cry because the burning drops hurt them. The women try to hide behind each other. The men gesticulate as if striking enemies with their assagais; it is to show that their arms are strong and that they can now go to the war, as it would have been taboo for them to join the army before this purification had taken place. Should a man be absent from home, his sticks are also brought to the sprinkling to be purified (1). Then the doctor goes with his pot, sprinkling all the village, the huts, the doors, the backs of the roofs, the fence, the belongings of the deceased which are kept to be distributed amongst the heirs. After this operation, the village is pure as far as the material things are concerned. The contamination which had fallen on all of them by reason of their owner's death, is removed. Before the sprinkling it would have been dangerous to remove anything. Now if any one may have left anything in the kraal before the decease, he can come and recover it. This is the act by which "the mourning is scattered" (hangalasa nkosi).

Visitors go home, having put on their *malopa*, if they are Ba-Ronga, strings of milala palm leaves round the head, the neck, the arms, the legs, if they belong to Northern clans. The custom of wearing white handkerchiefs round the head is spreading. If a goat is killed, every one wears a bracelet made of its skin round the wrist, the widow and the principal grave-digger put on strings, made from the same skin over the breast. The widow adds new strings when other goats are killed during the mourning visits which will take place later on, and until the

(1) In the Northern clans, says Viguet, a little of this mixture is kept to sprinkle the visitors during the following days, because "they are taboo for the things of the village, having not been cleansed"; (ba yila psa le mutin, hikuba a ba basisiwanga.)

adjudication of the inheritance. It is a sign that her husband is dead (a feliwile).

2) The Great Mourning in the Northern clans.

The foregoing is the sequence of the rites of the Great Mourning in the Ronga clans. In the Northern clans, according to Viguet, the same elements are found but under another form.

As soon as the mourning lamentations begin, the grave-diggers send some men to fetch the *tinyele*, which are bits of skin taken from the soles of elephant's feet. These are burnt on charcoal, together with cock's dung, and the mourners come and inhale the smoke with reeds, when they are tired of wailing. The *tinyele* are considered to be a poweful medicine. It is taboo to eat, even to snuff before having inhaled that smoke.

That first night, everyone sleeps in the open and the grave-diggers are not allowed to use their mats. They must cut grass to cover them for fear that their impurity might contaminate the mats. As customary, sexual relations are suspended between married people but the *bugango* is not taboo in the Northern clans, as girls (psigango) are not wives (basati). When, on the following days, visitors come to the mourning, they go straight to the grave with a small basket of mealies and spread them over it saying. "Go ! Die ! You have left us". This spreading of mealies is a *mhamba*, an offering. Then the doctor comes. It seems that his operations last only three days. There are no vapour baths properly speaking, but the doctor burns his powders together with bits of bark in broken pots and all the mourners come and inhale the smoke through reeds, as they did on the first day.

The *purification of the food* is performed by a rite which corresponds with the *lumisa milomo* of the Ronga. The doctor cooks the mealie pap together with a certain drug. He prepares " bupsa bya muri", the medicinal porridge. The grave-diggers make a ball of this food, while it is still hot, and

act as if they were throwing some of it into their mouths, but in reality they throw it over their shoulders. Then they put some more porridge into their mouths and eat it. The master of the mourning then takes the food and goes all over the village to perform this ceremony for all present. This is done also for the visitors arriving during the following days. Under no other condition would they be allowed to eat food in the village!

As regards the purification of the food for relatives who may come for a visit later on, after the Great Mourning, it is obtained by the rite called *mafularela*. "Fularela" means to turn one's back to another person. The day the absent one comes back to the mortuary village, the master of the mourning, the woman who has begun the *hlamba ndjaka* (see later on), takes one of the big wooden spoons which are used to distribute the porridge; she pours water into it and puts salt into the water. Then she puts into it a glowing cinder. The water partly evaporates. She then kneels down in front of the new comer, turning her back to him, passes the spoon round her waist from left to right and afterwards gives him to drink; this ceremony removes the *yila* of the food. Should it not be performed the food would cause disease, even death to the returning relative.

The master of the mourning, or of the death (nwinyi wa rifu), the wife of the deceased or the grave-digger who held the head in the burial, accomplishes a second act of purification or of strengthening for all the mourners; it is called the *nganganya*. The doctor takes a bulb of a big Lilliacea called *gonwa* (Crinum Forbesii), crushes it, adds to it some medecine and warms it on a stone which has been heated in the fire. The operation then begins on the infants. The grave-digger covers his fingers with this substance and, standing behind the child, he puts the fingers of both hands into its umbilicus and brings them round its waist pressing them firmly against the skin until they meet again on the spine. Should a child have not yet had the string tied round his loins (boha puri, see page 54), the strap of its ntehe alone will be anointed with the medicine.

As regards adults, the operation of *maganyo* is performed as follows: the master of the mourning passes his hand down from the knee to the toes. This rite is evidently in connexion with the act of walking which is thus purified, and with standing upright (yima), which means health and strength.

Cutting the hair is also a medicinal act, amongst the Hlabi. The physician takes a broken pot, pours into it water and a purifying powder, washes the head of the deceased's wife with that preparation and cuts her hair with a razor. Everyone takes a little of the mixture and washes his own head, and they then shave each other. The hair is thrown away into the bush, not on the grave.

The great mourning is concluded by the *phunga*, the sprinkling, corresponding to the Ronga *shuba*, which is performed exactly in the same way while the water is still boiling. The doctor sprinkles a whole potful on the people; then he pours fresh water into the pot and sprinkles the doors, the back part of the kraals of the oxen and of the goats. — "How about the pigs?" I asked Viguet. He laughed heartily! — "The pigs? They are nothing! They have come from the White people. They are so new to the country that lately the Pedi were killing them outside the villages and the men only were eating their flesh!" The pig has nothing to do with the Bantu ritual!

V. *Sexual rites of purification.*

This is a most curious and mysterious subject and, to understand it thoroughly, it is necessary to penetrate deeply into the Bantu mind and to forget our own conceptions of conjugal life. I hope none of my readers will be shocked by ceremonies which are evidently performed with the greatest earnestness and are a real aspiration toward purity, purity as it is conceived by a tribe still plunged in the dim notions of collective morality.

These rites are somewhat different in the Hlabi and

Ronga clans. They are called in the Northern clans *hlamba ndjaka*, in the Southern ones *lahla khombo*. I will begin by the description of the first, as being the most characteristic. Viguet who has seen them practised, and who took part in them himself, gave me a graphic description of them.

Ndjaka means two things : firstly, the objects left by the deceased and which will pass to his heirs in the course of time. The heirs are called *badyi ba ndjaka*, the eaters of the ndjaka. But *ndjaka* also signifies the frightful malediction accompanying death : " it is something which kills a great many men. " Therefore the *ndjaka* must be washed away ; *hlamba* means precisely to wash away.

This malediction or dangerous impurity contaminates the objects which must be cleansed by the sprinkling (phunga) as we have seen ; but it affects still more deeply the village as a whole, the *muti*, this organism which is at the base of all the Thonga society, and which has a life of its own, a collective life. That life must be purified. During the whole mourning, already during the last days of the deceased, when death was threatening, all sexual relations have been forbidden. Why ? Because the village was in a state of contamination... " Muti wu tjumile ". It cannot come back to the ordinary course of life without a special collective purification.

Let us see how this is managed on a particularly serious occasion, when the headman or another great personnage dies. Some weeks after the burial, all the married people of the village assemble, the men apart, the women apart. They discuss in what order the different couples must proceed to the purifying act. They question each other to know if each one has duly observed the law of continence. Should one of them confess that he has sinned (dyoha), he will have to take the lead. Should he have sinned and not confess it, he is very guilty. But he himself will suffer for his bad action : he has stolen the inheritance (a yibe ndjaka), and there will be no wonder if he begins to cough, gets thin and dies of consumption ! If there has been no transgression of the law, then the master of the mourning will have to commence. He goes out

of the village with his wife to the bush. There they have sexual relations in the ritual fashion, viz. s. n. i. (See Note 2). They come back by separate ways. The woman has taken with her a pot full of water ; she goes straight with it to a certain spot, which has been decided upon during the discussion, either in front of the great door of the village or at the door of the hut. There she washes her hands which contain " their impurity " (thyaka ra bona). All the other couples do the same, each woman coming in her turn to cleanse her impurity at the same place. When it is finished, the men also come to this spot and stamp on the ground. Sticks belonging to absent young men, a piece of clothing of a girl who happens to be away from home, are brought also to this spot and are purified. The same is done to the straps of the ntehe of the infant, as we have seen, but he is not allowed to be present as it might cause his death. When the purifying act is finished in all its phases, men and women go to the river and bathe ; the men higher up, the women lower down (Note 5).

Such is the *hlamba ndjaka* amongst the Thonga of the North, when the life of the village has been deeply affected by the death of an important member of the community. The rite is performed with less publicity when a child dies. Then the act takes place, not outside, in the bush, but inside the hut, as it is a private mourning. Should the husband have had regular intercourse with his wife before this purification has been done, it is a very great sin. His wife will go and confess their fault to one of the women of the village. This woman will tell it to her husband's mother, who will have to find the remedy. The guilty husband must not eat at all... If he eats, he will have eaten the contamination of death (u mitile rifu). The *hlamba ndjaka* of the whole village will have to take place (Note 6).

The hlamba ndjaka concerns first of all the inhabitants of the mortuary village, but it sometimes extends to the parents of the women of that village who dwell, of course, in other places. If the first wife of a man dies, his second wife, the one with whom the widower has begun the purifying operation at home,

will have to go to her own parents *to give them water* (ku ha mati), as they say, viz, to cleanse them. She takes with her in a pot a portion of the water used for the purification, arriving early in the morning in the neighbourhood of the paternal kraal and calls her mother. Then she washes her hands on the spot and all her relatives will come and stamp on the ground. This is considered a great duty which a married daughter ought never to forget, otherwise she is said to have turned her back on her parents (a ba fularelile). They will be angry with her and not visit her for at least a year (Note 7). The woman who has done this is called " the one who has cleansed the inheritance " (muhlantsi wa ndjaka). She has taken upon her the contamination, but she will not suffer from it, because she belongs to another family, and the contamination of death is dangerous more especially to the people who are of the same blood as the deceased. This woman will assuredly be praised and even rewarded with two hoes. When she goes to her relatives " to give them water ", she will make a present of these two hoes to her father who will say : " All right ! You have cleansed those people ". Then she will have the right of adorning herself with the bracelets of her deceased co-wife ! Old women having no more sexual intercourse, are allowed to appropriate the old clothing of a deceased woman.

The Ba-Ronga do not know the expression hlamba ndjaka. They have a corresponding rite, performed in the same manner, which they call *lahla khombo*. *Khombo* means misfortune, *lahla*, to throw away. It is the medicine of death (muri wa lifu), said Magingi, an old heathen of Rikatla. It is also said " to heal the mourning " (daha nkosi) This rite more especially concerns the grave-diggers. The one who carried the legs of the deceased commences. The sexual relations take place very early in the morning. When his wife has come back, she washes her hands at the door of her hut, and all the inhabitants of the village come and stamp on the wet place; then they enter the hut. The doctor comes and prepares a steam bath for the man. Then the second grave-digger performs his *lahla khombo*, and the same gathering of

all the members of the community takes place before his hut. Afterwards the village is pure. But if the grave-diggers are cleansed, the widows are not yet purified and we shall see that, for them, the *lahla khombo* will last much longer.

A man who trangresses the law of continence before the lahla khombo is said in Ronga to have "crossed the village" (A tjemakanya muti). He has taken the mourning (nkosi), the misfortune (khombo) upon himself. He will have sores all over his body and will begin to cough (consumption).

Amongst the Ronga, it seems also that the *bugango* is prohibited in mortuary villages during the marginal period. The men even prevent boys going to the villages to see their girls, says Mbekwa, an old inhabitant of Nondwane.

VI. *Familial rites.*

After two or three months, a first gathering of the whole family of the deceased takes place. Amongst the Ba-Ronga its function is to close or break down the mortuary hut. Amongst the Northern clans, no relation is established between this family gathering and the fate of the hut. But everywhere its principal aim seems to be to restore the family whose head has been removed by death and which must be reorganised.

1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga.

For the Ba-Ronga the habitation of the deceased is taboed. It is a *shira* (grave), as well as the place in which he has been buried and, for this reason, it must be destroyed. But this destruction is not accomplished at once. Some time must elapse(1), two, three, nine months, before the family gathering takes place. I witnessed it near Rikatla on December 15th 1907 and can therefore describe this rite in detail.

(1) At any rate, such is the old law. But nowadays the Ronga sometimes crush at once the hut during the five days to save trouble. It was done so in the case of Sokis.

Manyibane had died five or six months previously. He was the headman of a large village in the Shifimbatlelo district (18 miles North of Lourenço Marques). His son Mugwanu had been chosen to take his place, but Manyibane had a younger brother, called Fenis, who had taken care of the village in the meantime. All the relatives were assembled. Groups were formed under all the trees. At 4 ½ p. m. the men began to gather near the old black-roofed hut; one of them, an elderly man, took between his teeth a piece of a root of a special juncus, called *sungi*, bit off a little of it and, after having chewed this substance, he rubbed his two legs with it (evidently to find courage and strength for the work he was undertaking) and penetrated into the old hut. He came back bringing with him a dozen beautiful white eggs!.. The hen did not know that the habitation of the deceased was a taboed grave, and had laid her eggs in this favourable refuge! Then all the men came nearer and began to pull out the poles of the wall, digging on both sides of each pole; some of them were lifting the roof so as to make room enough for the poles to be pulled out. This work was accomplished with great care: the earth was carefully placed in a pot and slowly poured out some distance away; the poles were gently laid down in front of the entrance, on the top of the door, which had been previously placed there, thus forming a regular heap. These precautions are taken out of respect for the deceased. It would be an insult to him to do otherwise and a relation guilty of such an offence " would at once be seized by colics, the disease of the wolves (masule) ". Some boys, clad in European dress, threw poles violently on the ground. Spoon laughed: " They know the *shilungo*, the ways of the White men ", he said. " They have lost their respect! "

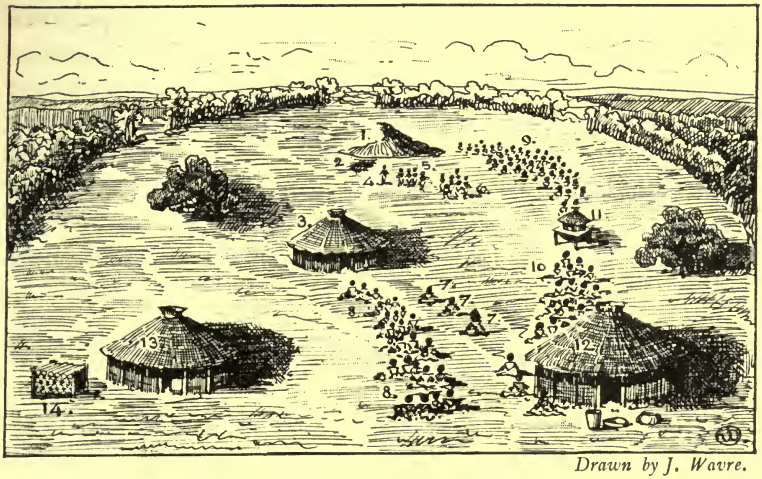
When all the poles were removed and there remained only the reeds of the wall, the men jumped on the roof. The roof is a big conical basket made of sticks tied together and covered with grass. It sank down at once under their weight. But they wanted to flatten the cone, to crush it down to the level of the soil. Therefore some of the men were pulling the sticks out of the roof to lessen the resistance; some were kicking it in order

to breack the sticks. They could not succeed; the cone was still there more or less deformed. At the end they brought axes and chopped all round, about half way up the cone, and with great vociferations brought the destroyed hut to the level of the ground. Everything belonging to it will be left there to rot. No one dares to remove or to burn this ruin. It is a taboo. (1)

The men were satisfied. They had succeeded: "The mourning had not overcome them", (nkosi a wu ba hlulanga), as would have been the case had one of them met with an accident during the operation. Some pots full of water were brought and they washed their hands and their faces conscientiously. They retired a while and all the members of the family, the women included, came and settled themselves as shown on the adjoining illustration of the scene. In front of the crushed hut *(1)*, in the space comprised between it and the small hut of the first widow *(3)*, the old men sat down *(4)*, near them the *batukulu*, viz. the uterine nephews of the deceased *(5)*, their wives, and a few old women *(6)*. The other men *(10)* and women of mature age *(9)* took their places between the neighbouring huts, leaving a wide place for the dance. The brother of the deceased, Fenis, brought on his shoulders a young goat. Two hens and a cock were provided, in all two male and two female offerings. Some branches covered with leaves were spread before the heaps of poles (2), and the *batukulu* began to kill the victims. One of them took the cock by the legs, his brother held the head and cut the neck half through. At each cut of the knife, all the women were ejaculating their *mikulungwana* (piercing cries). He threw the fowl down, still living and panting. So they did with the three fowls, everybody laughing and amused at seeing them jump before dying. Then one of the *batukulu* seized the goat by one of the forelegs, lifted it up as high as he could, and

(1) In a neighbouring district, an evangelist of ours built a nice chapel near the ruin of the chief Gwaba. It was impossible for months to remove that ugly decaying roof; people on the spot were opposed to it and the chieftainess of the Mabota district gave permission only because the evangelist was connected with White people.

planted an assagai under the shoulders, trying to reach the heart. The face of the goat was turned towards the North. (1) At once more mikulugwane! The animal was crying pitifully ; its agony lasted five minutes at least and the whole time the women were shouting with pleasure, because it is necessary that a victim should cry! In the groups, men and women were discussing where and how the sacrificer ought to introduce the blade



Drawn by J. Wavre.

THE CEREMONY OF CRUSHING DOWN THE HUT

1. Deceased's hut, crushed down. 2. Heap of poles. 3. Provisional hut of the widow. 4. Sacrificer. 5. Uterine nephews. 6. Wives, of the uterine nephews. 7. Dancers. 8. Women clapping their hands. 9. Other women. 10. Men. 11. Henhouse. 12. Hut of the younger brother. 13. Hut of the big woman who danced. 14. A "shigiyane", wood pile built by her daugter-in-law's relatives.

in order to kill the goat more quickly. His wife came and helped him, and not until after ten minutes, at least, did they succeed.

Then, while the batukulu and the old men were busy with

(1) I suppose the Manyibane family came from the North, and they wanted the goat to cry in this direction to call the spirits of the ancestors to the sacrifice.

the victims, cutting them up, squeezing the psanyi (half digested grass) out of the bowels, the other mourners began to sing and to dance. First an elderly woman, of a very clear complexion and a mephistophelean face, very tall, with a curiously licentious smile, came in the middle of the place, opened wide her arms and *suma*, began to sing. Together with her song, she was performing a strange mimicry with her thighs. This mimicry took a more and more lascivious character: it became a regular womb dance, so immoral (Note 3) that the men dropped their eyes, as if they feared that she would take off all her clothing. But the other women seemed to thoroughly enjoy this horrible performance and were encouraging her by clapping their hands and beating their drums. The words of her songs were also of a very doubtful character. She was describing an adulterous woman going during the night from one hut to the other, seeking for lovers, knocking on the walls (to attract the notice of the men ?).

> The walls of the huts have deceived her fellow-women when she goes knocking on them...

Another old woman, of at least seventy years of age, followed her and, running with a mincing gait through the place, was uttering words of the same kind.

This seems very immoral indeed. Let us remember however that, in the opinion of the Thonga, these songs which are taboo in ordinary life are specially oppropriate to the mourning period. "These women have been uncovered by the death of their husband", said Mboza. " There is no longer any restraint on them. They are full of bitterness when they perform those lascivious dances". The reason is perhaps deeper, as it is not only the widows who sing these words : we are still in a marginal period, the period of mourning, and these phases of life are marked for the Bantu by this strange contrast : prohibition of sexual intercourse and a shameless overflowing of impure words and gesticulations (Note 8).

But in the meantime, the *batukulu* had finished their work. They had already distributed the various parts of the victim

according to rule, to the visitors, who will eat them on their way home, not in the village; it is taboo. They have put aside one shoulder, the lungs and one of the hoofs for the sacrifice. Relatives had made a provision of *psanyi*. An old man then took a pill made of the *psanyi*, that found in the smallest stomach called shihlakahla. He pressed it against his lips, took in his mouth, a little of the liquid squeezed from it and spit it out again with the sacrament *tsu*. He then proceeded to pray: "You, Manyiban, you have left us. People used to say you were a wizard (a clever man who could overcome death). In what has your witchcraft resulted? Are you not dead! You have left us in peace. Go to Tlotlomane; let Tlotlomane go to X; let X go to Y, etc. (He utters the names of the ancestors). Call each other to come here and look. Are we not gathered together? Here is so and so. The batukulu also are here. Accept this offering and may we live peacefully together, visit each other (Note 4). Even if they do not come to pay me visits, let them come to Fenis; he is their father now. And you, Mugwano, you remain at the head of the village. You are their headman now. Do not scatter your people. Cultivate good relations with each other".

But a woman suddenly stands up and interrupts him: "Bring everything to the light," she says! The old priest stops. She goes on: "They say I am a Mutchopi" (a woman of dissolute manners). The mikulungwane are heard on all sides. It is a family drama which we attend! This woman is the daughter of the deceased; Manyibane has sold her to pay off his debts; he has not kept the lobola money to buy a wife for one of her brothers: that is the reason why they hate her. They do not receive her in the village. She pours out her grievances before them in this family gathering, when they are praying to their ancestors... It is the favourable time!... She goes on: "Is it my fault? Did I not obey our father? I have not fled away. Now what am I to do? He alone received me here! You despise me. Say everything! Do not hide it!"

Her interruption has lasted five minutes at least and she goes back to her place very angry. Sometimes relatives who have

serious complaints to make agains ttheir kinsfolk, choose this precise moment to vent their anger and leave the gathering with violent words. In such a case, it is said: " The mourning has overcome this family ".

The old priest is a little disconcerted. He speaks at random, always calling his Tlotlomane. The whole scene is perfectly natural, but the participants do not show the slightest religious awe. Suddenly one of the batukulu rises, takes a bottle of wine which has been also brought there as an offering, pours a little of it in a glass and raises it to the lips of the old man. " He cuts his prayer " and while all the attention of the public is concentrated upon this act (which belongs also to the ritual, as the priest must be the first to partake of the offering), the wives of the batukulu rush towards the shoulders, lungs and hoofs of the goats and the bottle of wine, seize them and run away towards the west. They have stolen the meat of the sacrifice! At once all stand up and follow them laughing, shouting and pelting them with the *psanyi*, which they had kept for this purpose. The thieves hide themselves behind some bush and eat the meat. Uterine nephews are representatives of the gods, as we shall see later on, and they assert their right by stealing the offering and eating it up.

This ceremony is highly characteristic as it embodies some of the principal ideas of the Thonga in the domain of religion, social life and taboo. It was worth while describing and we shall refer to it later on, when dealing with sacrifices and the position of the uterine nephews in the family.

The crushing down of the hut is not performed exactly in the same manner amongst the Ba-Ronga. In the clans *South of the Bay*, they only *close* it (pfala yindlu). They dig holes in front of the door, into which they insert poles of the bush called *nhleha*, tying thorny branches horizontally to them. The shield of the deceased is placed against the door. The religious rite then takes place and from the skins of the sacrified goats strips are cut which the widows will have to wear *en bandoulière* during the following months of their widowhood. The astragalus bones are kept and hung round the neck. The gall-bladder is also

preserved and fixed in the hair of the new master of the village as a sign of his new position.

In the *district of Makaneta*, on the estuary of the Nkomati the ceremony comprises two successive acts. First there is also a *provisory closing* of the hut, which can take place one month after the death and is accompanied by the family gathering and the religious ceremony. One year later, when the inheritance is adjudicated, the hut is crushed down, but only if it belonged to a headman of the village and if the kraal is obliged to move in consequence of the death. If it be the hut of one of the subordinates, the roof is simply lifted off and thrown away into the bush.

Another very significant rite in connexion with the closing of the hut is accomplished on the death of the master of the village. A branch is cut from the tree of the village, the tree which was revealed by the divinatory bones as the one near which the headman had to build (See Part II): half of the branch is placed across the great gate of the village, which is then closed and another gate is opened, at some distance, in the fence; the other half is put over the door of the crushed hut.

There seem to be great variances in the performance of these ceremonies everywhere. I believe without being able to vouch for it that, when two family gatherings take place, during this last period of the mourning, the first one is held to proclaim the new master of the village and the second to distribute the inheritance amongst the heirs at law. At any rate these two important acts take place at the gatherings. As the inheritance consists mainly in live stock... human stock, the wives of the deceased, I shall describe the adjudication when treating of the fate of widows.

2) Familial rites in the Northern clans.

A month after the burial, there is a first gathering of the grave-diggers. They are invited by the widows to a beer feast. This beer is called : " the beer of the hyenas ", as the hyenas also dig graves ! No equivocal compliment is intended,

the widows merely meaning to thank these men for their services.

In the northern clans, *yindlu a yi yili*, the hut is not taboo. One can sleep in it again after the five days of the Great Mourning. The plaster of the doorposts is repaired, and a new crown is put on the top when the hut again finds an owner. (1) The feast of the closing of the hut is therefore replaced by what is called the *beer of the mourning* (byala bya nkosi). All the relatives, brothers, brothers-in-law, nephews, etc., bring one goat, or half a sovereign, or one sovereign, to the master of the mourning, the heir of the village. That individual must give them back as much as he receives from them, one goat for one goat, (timbuti ti labana), one sovereign for one sovereign, and all the animals are killed according to rule. There were fourteen of them at a certain gathering held in the Nkuna capital to mourn one of the wives of the chief Shiluvane in 1905. A sacrifice is offered; the men sit on one side, the women on the other; the *kokwane*, viz. the maternal uncle of the deceased takes the *psanyi* and squeezes it on them all while praying, or rather insulting the gods who have afflicted them with such a bereavement. All rub their chests with this green liquid and add their insults to those of the priest.

According to Viguet, it is the first occasion on which the deceased is treated as a god and prayed to: "Look! You have left the village without a head to lead it! Keep them! Bless them and increase them". The *batukulu* then come to take that portion of the victim which has been put aside for the gods. It does not appear that they steal it, as it is the case amongst the Ba-Ronga.

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Such is the story of the mourning. Here are some technical expressions in connexion with it; Hamba nkosi, to conduct the

(1) The hut of a leper alone is considered irremediably tabooed as the sufferer is buried in it. They dig a hole in which he is pushed by means of sticks. The roof is crushed down over him.

mourning. Djila nkosi, to utter mourning lamentations. Daha nkosi, to treat it by purification ceremonies. Kota nkosi, to cope with it. Nkosi wu wupfa, it ripens. Nkosi wu hela, it comes to an end. A wu boli, it does not get rotten, viz. it is always possible to pay a mourning visit.

The name of the deceased, when quoted is often preceeded with the word " Matjuwa ", exactly as *feu* in French and *late* in English.

VII. *Various cases of death.*

So far I have treated specially of the death of a headman, who had reached the age of an adult, and who died at home. There are a few other cases to describe.

Should the man *have died far away from home*, in Johannesburg for instance, no ceremony will take place before the news is thoroughly confirmed. Then all the relatives assemble. A grave is dug and all his mats and his clothing are buried in it. These objects which he was using every day, which have been soiled by the exudations from the body, are *himself*. A sacrifice will be made over that grave, not by the means of the nkanye twig but with a fowl which is thrown on the grave. Formerly the fowl was left on the ground, but nowadays tho uterine nephews steal it. The widow will eat with her hands till the burial, though death took place long before and was already publicly known; she will begin to use a spoon only after the burial has taken place. This fact illustrates strangely the ritualistic notion which is at the base of all these mourning customs! The steam baths, the sprinkling on the fifth day, the singing, dancing and the condolence visits take place just the same as in ordinary mourning.

In the Northern clans, the belongings of a man who dies far away (matikwen, in the lands) are burnt. The purifying sprinklings are performed. The same is done for relatives who die accidentally and whose corpses have not been buried;

for instance if they were killed by a wild beast or in battle.

When a *stranger* dies in a Thonga village, when no one knows him, "*a nga na ntshumu*" — "he does not matter", says Viguet. The grown-up men will bury him. They dig a hole and drag the corpse into it with a rope. They do not touch it. There is no contagion, therefore no ceremony of purification. Amongst the Maluleke and Hlengwe, such a corpse is burnt. They attend to the cremation and do not leave the spot till they hear an explosion (bum !), which shows that all danger (khombo) has departed.

When an *infant* dies, it must, be buried in a broken pot. The pot is placed in the earth the opening being half covered with a layer of ashes, in such a way that there remains a passage for the air. It is taboo to bury it otherwise, as long as it has not passed through the rite of presentation to the moon (page 51). *An older child* is buried in the ordinary way but with very few ceremonies. There is no religious act. The mother alone attends the funeral. The father digs the grave but he does nothing else. He says: "We, holders of the assagai, we do not bury such little ones. They are but water, they are but a womb, (nyimba) they are but a *ntehe*." A father pays very little attention to little children. It is only when they begin to smile that he will show them some affection. Then it may be that he will press his little one against his breast and kiss its temple, especially if he comes back home from a journey.

In the case of suicide, the corpse is buried according to ordinary rules. But the tree to which the man hanged himself is cut down. It is taboo: other people might commit suicide at the same place. People do not use its wood for fuel.

If a woman dies during pregnancy, she must be cut open to see what is the sex of her child. This must be done inside the grave, before the earth is covered in. As Mboza said: "The air (moya) must come out". He told me the story of a husband in the Mabota country who nearly fainted when obliged to perform this painful operation. But it is a great taboo, as the woman might become a god of bitterness (shikwembo sha shibiti), if buried without this precaution (See Part

VI). In the Maluleke clan, women who die pregnant, or in confinement, are cremated.

Lepers alone are buried in the hut. In Maputju ordinary people are buried in front of the hut, whilst the regular place, in the other parts of the Ronga territory is behind the hut, *mahosi*. The members of the reigning family are buried in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood which belongs to them. Every big family can have its *ntimu* and the men are buried there according to their villages: each village has its place and the place is called after the name of the headman of the village. So in the Lebombo sacred wood, there was "the village of Nkolele, southwards, the village of Shihubane, northwards, etc.

The bones of the dead are never disinterred. It is a taboo; a grave is respected and women do not dare to till the ground over it. Often one comes across a little dense bush in the midst of mealie gardens, and one sees broken pots under the branches. It is an old grave. Later on, when no one remembers who has been buried there, agriculture regains its sway. If a bush fire has reached the sacred wood and damaged it, the person who lit it must atone by sacrificing a fowl in order to "quench" (timula) it.

CONCLUSION ABOUT DEATH AND FUNERAL

These very complicated funeral rites of the Thonga clearly show the existence of three great intuitions in their minds:

1) Man is immortal and becomes a god through death.

2) There is extreme danger attached to the defilement which accompanies death. The uncleanness contaminates the collectivity and can only be removed by collective purification.

3) The social group, being diminished by death, must be reinforced by special means (family gatherings, choice of a successor, etc.) Hence three categories of rites: *religious*, *purificatory* and *social*.

On the other hand some of the rites we have described present unmistakably the character of *passage rites*, because death also means a passage: for the deceased, passage from the world of the living to the world of the dead; for his relations, passage from one phase of life to another.

Separation from the terrestrial life is symbolised for the deceased by the rite of piercing the wall of the hut in order to solemnise, as it were, his official departure from his former dwelling. I should consider also as a separation rite the custom of cutting through all his garments and mats, in order to make them "draw the last breath". To effect aggregation to the new world, the grave-diggers prepare for him an underground hut and square place, they put him in the sitting position in his new dwelling (if such is the true explanation of the folding of the limbs), they direct his eyes towards the cardinal point whence his ancestors have come. I have sometimes had the impression that even in these rites, the idea of a marginal period, or of a period of transition was not wanting: the deceased is not prayed to prior to the great family gatherings, which take place three, six, or twelve months after the death. Then his hut is crushed or closed. It seems that he has gone through an evolution towards deity, as his corpse was decaying in the grave, and the occlusion of his hut, with his shield put before the door, might well mean his definite incorporation in the world of the dead, and also the means of preventing him from returning to this world and bringing misfortune to his relatives.

As regards the relatives, they separate with the former phase by the cutting of the hair, putting out the old fire, leaving off their clothing and wearing mourning attire. A very distinct period of margin then begins, marked by the sexual taboos accompanying it, and they are aggregated again to the ordinary world and to the new phase of their life by all the ceremonies which I have explained at length. Here, however, as the seclusion was caused by a certain most dreaded defilement, the aggregation rites all bear the character of removal of uncleanness: uncleanness of the food, of the gardens, of the bereaved, mostly grave-diggers and widows, of the whole community which is cleansed by the sexual rite of hlamba ndjaka, etc

If classifying were equivalent to understanding, we might say that we have fairly well understood the complicated Thonga rites which accompany death... But who could boast of having fully understood such a mysterious and deep subject? Death is the great shadow which hovers over life and chills the human heart. Outside of an enlightened faith, it is, and remains, the King of Terrors. Never more than on the edge of a grave did I pity my poor black brethren, wondering how they tried to calm their hearts and to overcome their sorrow. There is something profoundly touching in their most absurd rites, because, after all, they all are imposed by a craving for life and

purity. Will my readers allow me to conclude this subject by a personal reminiscence. The day I attended the burial of Sokis, when his relatives had finished filling in the grave, they asked me to lead them in worship. Bantu heathenism is so poor, it feels so weak that it readily accepts the help of a higher religion. So I tried to turn the eyes of my hearers away from the underground hut, and to fix them on the eternal dwellings of the Father's house. Then Sokis youngest brother took the nkanye twig and performed the heathen religious ceremony, calling his ancestors to come and bless them and entreating the deceased to leave them in peace. The contrast between those two prayers made on the same grave was striking indeed. And, whatever we may think, even if we had no religious convictions at all, should we not earnestly desire that, for these people, the bright comforting Christian hope may dispel the darkness of their thoughts and the sufferings involved in their rites.

CHAPTER II

The evolution of a woman from Birth to Death

Essay of a Ronga girl on the subject.

In July 1897, the School Inspector gave to the big girls of the Swiss Mission school at Lourenço Marques the following subject for an examination in composition: "The life of a Ronga woman" This is the translation of some of the pupils essays on the life of one of their country women:

"When a girl is born amongst the Ba-Ronga, people come and congratulate the mother and say: "A ma buyeni mati", that is to say: "Let the water come!" When the time is at hand when she will come out of the hut, ochre is crushed for her and a calabash full of the fat of *nkuhlu* almond is prepared, and the two ingredients are mixed and smeared over her."

"Her curly hairs are stretched out in a corkscrew fashion, ochre is put on them to transform them into a kind of rat's tails. (It is the operation called *hora ngoya*.) The mother also smears herself over with ochre, and puts on her head a crown of small strings (shikupu). (1) Then, when the child lets her head fall on account of the weakness of her neck, a plaited string, which is just the right size for a necklace, is tied round her throat. Thus, they say, her nape will be strengthened."

"A small calabash with medicine is given her to drink; they also prepare for her a small pot for the medicine and they say it is to lessen the dangers of growth (pumba nombo), so that the

(1) I have heard this custom explained as follows: the mothers amuse the children by shaking their heads; the small strings dance about and make the babies laugh. This can only be true of infants which are already two or three months old.

sickness should not be too bad. (These are the milombyana, see page 46.) After her birth she is carried in the skin of a

Phot. A. Borel.

GIRLS WITH BABIES AT MAKULANE

(Maputju country).

gazelle (mhunti) which her mother ties round her neck and her loins. When that skin has become too small, they get one of an antelope (mhala). She begins to walk; when her mother sends her on an errand she accomplishes it. She also begins to talk, to know her father and mother. Then, when she has grown, they prepare for her a small pot of pounded and cooked mealies so that she should eat of it. After three years she is weaned and goes to stay for a time with her grandmother. After that she returns home."

"When she has learnt to walk, she is very fond of playing with shells of the sala. She cooks in them. Then, when she has done with them, she takes small pots and cooks little dinners. She also gets a small calabash, she goes to the lake to draw water and, on coming back she gives it to her father so that he may wash his face. Here she is now gathering small bits of wood; she makes small bundles of them and brings them home. Later on she will make heavier bundles."

"When she has grown up more, she will take charge of the work of her mother. She will do the work. But if the mother sees that she cannot do it all, she will help her. It can however be said that the mother needs no longer to crush her mealies, neither to go to the well nor to the fireplace. When she is quite a grown up girl, the suitors come. If they are accepted, they bring the purchase money. They buy her (lobola) and do all they like. If she is prolific, she will bear many children. Now and then she returns to her parents' village, then she comes back to her husband. Her children grow. They go to get water, to cut her wood, to plough her fields. She goes with them. When they are grown-up, they get married. If amongst them there is a son, he goes to buy his wife. Thus she looks for a mother-in-law for her son. He will then be truly a man because he has got a mother-in-law! When her children are married, the mother again begins to do all her work. She steeps her mealies, crushes them to make flour, she cuts her wood, cooks her beer; she prepares the light beer; she smears the floor of her hut; this is what she does till she is quite old."

"When she is quite old, they feed her. Her grand'children are

sent to bring her food. When they are hungry, they stop on the way and eat it themselves. On their return they say : " We have indeed given it to her ". In the morning they put a stick in her hand and help her to get out of her hut, so that she can warm herself in the sun. "

" Then when the Ronga woman is quite old she begins to see no more and to hear no more. She falls into second childhood. All she does is to complain and to say, crying, that she is ill treated. And this is the end ! "

The girl who wrote this essay was but emerging from childhood, and has consequently enlarged more especially upon the first phase of the life. The life of a woman is not very different from that of a man at that stage. Differences however come in later on, and we shall have to add some important facts relating to the fate of the women before marriage, during the conjugal life, and in widowhood.

A. BEFORE MARRIAGE

I. *The Girl's games.*

As we have seen from the essay of the schoolgirl, Ronga girls imitate the action of their mothers, their cooking, their gathering fuel, etc., just as the boys imitate the fighting, the hunting of the men. They play also with *dolls* nursing them as they see the women nursing babies. These dolls are called *vule*. The origin of the play is as follows : a little girl asks her mother who is carrying a younger child on her shoulders : " Mother where did you find your baby ? — Oh ! I found it in the bush (ntlhaben). — Please bring me one also, mother. — All right ! — " Next day the mother plucks a sala in the bush, removes all the stones inside, lets it dry and fixes it to the end of a stick. She pierces the upper part of the sphere, introduces through the holes bits of string to imitate hair, smears them over with ochre, ties a little clothing round

the stick and gives it to the girl ! Or if the mother has said : " I found the baby in the banana grove ", the father will cut a banana stem, take the heart of the bulb, beat it so as to separate the fibres which will then represent the hair of the baby, and the girl will play with it for a time.

Girls, like boys, have also special games.

First the *ntshengu -ntshengu*. A big girl takes the part of the mother and all the little ones hide behind her. She stretches out her arms to protect them against another girl, who is the thief and who tries to take the children away. Notwithstanding the mother's efforts, all are taken one by one, and the thieving is done whilst they sing :

Alack ! Mother ! Protect us, protect us !

the mother answers :

All my children are taken, all will soon be taken,
all will soon be taken, there, behind me.

(Yo ! Mamana ! ntshengu-ntshengu ! ba hela hi shiruba)

The capture being effected, all the children sit down in a row and cross their legs. To their right and left they dig small holes which represent wells or pots. The mother passes. She stretches out their legs and they let her do it. Then she pretends to drink water from their pitchers and says : " My child, where did you find this water ? " The child says : " Oh ! I have drawn it over there, at the spring, under the banana trees, in the cool shade. " Then comes the girl who plays the part of the thief. She tries to stretch out their legs. But the children refuse ; they stiffen themselves. She tastes their water and enquires where they brought it from. — " I drew it in a nasty hole full of frogs, mud and dirt". They add all the different sayings they can think of.

As the boys sing to the transport oxen when a wagon comes by the road, so the girls address a kind of *incantation to a big grey lizard* called *galagala*, whose head can turn blue at its will. The lizard is found lying on a branch, warming itself in the rays

of the sun. One girl approaches it, claps her hands under its nose, singing in a monotonous tone :

Gala-gala, hana-hana nhloko !
Big lizard, lift up lift up your head !

It seems that the lizard is so fascinated by the song that he stretches his neck and swings his head to and fro during the whole time that the girl claps her hands.

To the *crabs*, which are very numerous in the slime on the sea-shore, and who have only one claw coloured green, violet or enamelled blue, they sing :

Ba ka mphembemunwe, tlakula silawuto !
Come along, you animals with only one claw ! Lift it up and bring it down again.

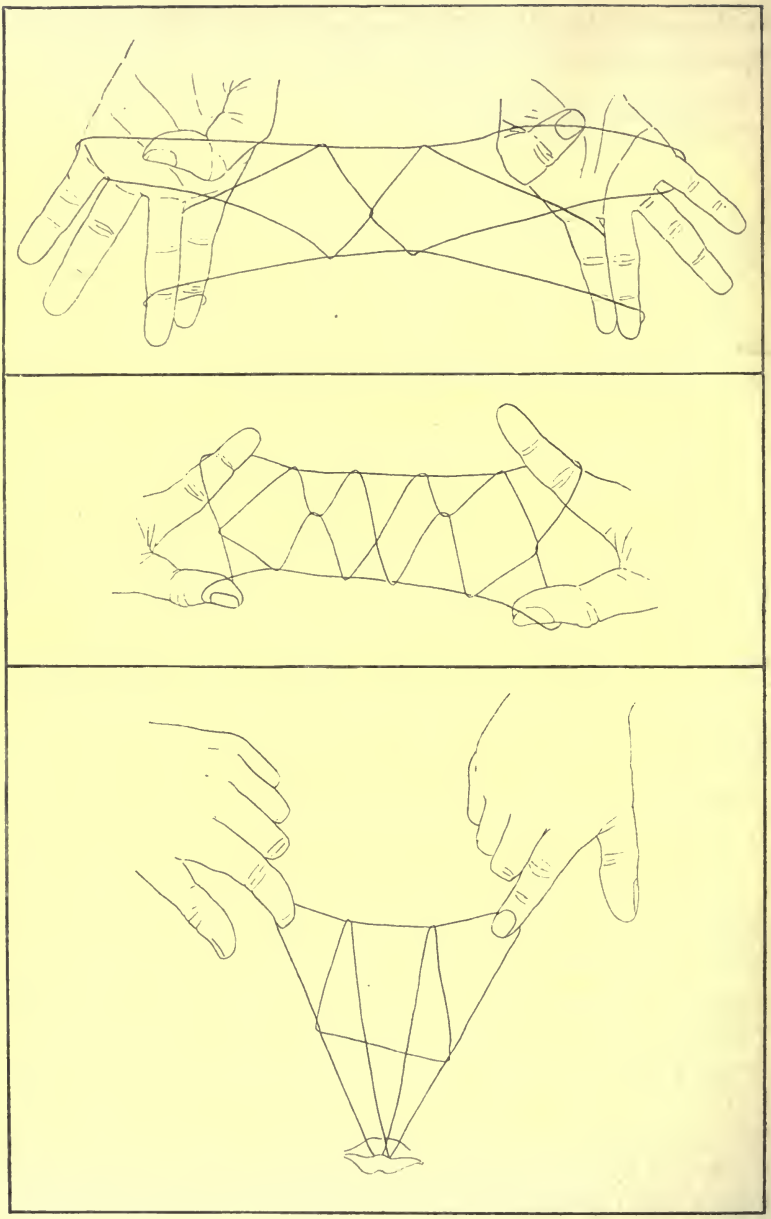
The little girls who go hunting crabs as a condiment for their food assured me that, on hearing this song, the crustaceans do come out of their holes and that the harvest is then a large one.

When an *owl*, mistaking the time, comes out of her hiding place at noon, she is received with applause and they sing to her :

Shikotana, gaulela fole !
Owl ! flap your wings ! You will find tobacco !

Another girl's game, which is wide-spread, and in which the young Thonga acquire great proficieny is called : *ku tha bu-hlolo*. They take a string tied at both ends so as to form a large ring, and make all kinds of complicated figures by twisting it with their fingers and even with their lips. I have made a drawing of some of them. Girls compete together and try to surpass each other in inventing new figures. They teach each other this *buhlolo*.

Another old game, which is found under various forms in a great number of countries, is the *mathakisana*, knuckle bones. Girls gather stones of the nkanye fruit (tinfula), dig a hole,



Drawn by J. Wavre.

Various forms of buhlolo (string game).

and put them into it. One of them takes a kind of ball (shigungu), perhaps a small fruit of sala, or any other fruit. She throws it in the air and, in the meantime, she takes out of the hole four or five stones and puts them back leaving only one outside. This stone is then put aside. She must be very clever and very quick in removing and replacing all the stones except one, because the ball will soon fall down and she must catch it in her hands. Should she take out of the hole only one stone, she has done wrong (a tjongolile) ; should she leave outside of it more than one stone, she is wrong also (a hoshile). Should the ball fall on the ground, it is taboo. (psa yila) ! She has lost her turn. If the ball falls on her body, it is not so bad. Her companions will say to her : " Gangasheta ". Then she must throw the ball and receive it two or three times on the upper part of her hand, then again in her hand, and if she succeeds in this, she is allowed to go on. When she has been able to take all the stones from the hole without making any mistake, she has beaten her co-players (a ba mphyinshile).

Natives do not play for stakes as a rule, but, if two of them challenge each other, each pretending to be the more clever at the game, they may arrange that the one who loses must give a fowl to the winner.

The ordinary word for *play* is *ku tlanga*. But there is another word *ku tha*, which is used for the more refined games, the buhlolo, the mathakusana, the tshuba, the reciting of tales, riddles or proverbs (psitekatekisa) and the guessing (mhumhana). We shall describe these four last games when treating of the life of the village, and the literary life.

II. *Nubility customs.*

1) The Khomba rite.

When a girl comes of age, no special ceremony is performed amongst the Ba-Ronga. She is said, just as the boy, to have " drunk the nkanye " (page 95). She confesses to her mother

that her menses (*tinwheti, viz. months*) have appeared for the first time, and the mother simply answers : " Hi ku kula" — " this means growth. "

But in the Northern clans a characteristic rite has been preserved, or borrowed, from the Suto-Pedi who attach great importance to it. It is called *khomba*, or *yisa matin*, to lead to the water, and is performed in the following manner. The girl, when she thinks that the time of nubility is near, chooses an adoptive mother, possibly in a neighbouring village. She works for her, helps her in gathering her fuel. When the day has come, she flies away from her village and goes to that adoptive mother " to weep near her " (a rilela ka yena). These are distinct separation rites. She says : " Ndji khombile " — " I am of age ". Then will begin a *seclusion period* of one month. Three of four girls receive the initiation together. They are shut up in a hut and when they come outside, they must always wear over their face a veil consisting of a of cloth very dirty and greasy. Every morning they are led to the pool and their whole body is immersed in the water as far as the neck. Other initiated girls or women accompany them singing obscene songs, driving away with sticks any man who happens to be on the road, as no man is allowed to see a girl during this period. If a man happens to come near the group, the women ask him the secret formulae of the circumcision school, not the long ones but the short ones, probably those which contain licentious words. Should he be unable to answer, they beat him. It is said that a man who sees a girl during this month becomes blind ! When the cortege of women accompanying the initiated has returned home, the nubile girls are imprisoned in the hut. They are teased, pinched, scratched by the adoptive mothers or by other women ; they must also listen to the licentious songs which are sung for them. Though they are trembling from cold, being still wet, they are not allowed to come near the fire. They are also instructed in sexual matters, and told that they must never reveal anything about the blood of the menses to a man. They are also exhorted to be very polite to every grown up person, and must salute everybody entering

the hut, even those passing before the door, by clapping their hands. Sometiems the wind moves some dead leaves ; they mistake this noise for the sound of steps and salute reverently !

At the end of the month the adoptive mother brings the girl home to her true mother. She also presents her with a pot of beer. If the initiated has been already bought by lobola, the mother goes with her to her future husband and says to him : " She is grown up. " He will give her a present of £ 1., and the veil will be taken away. These last rites distinctly mean the aggregation of the girl to the adult society and all this khomba custom is a very good example of passage rite, the passage being from the asexual to the sexual group.

The Pedi-Suto clans of the Transvaal also practise this rite, which they call *khoba*. In addition they have the *bale*, the initiation school for girls corresponding to the circumcision school of the boys. The Nkuna clan of the Thonga is said to have practised it also in former times, but the *bale* has entirely disappeared all through the Thonga tribe.

There are three other customs more or less related to nubility : the tattooing, the pointing of the teeth and the milebe custom.

2) Tattooing (Tlhabela tinhlanga).

There have been different ways of tattooing amongst the Thonga. In former times, in the Northern clans, Ba-Thonga used to disfigure themselves by making very big black pimples on the forehead, the nose, the cheeks. Hence the name of *Knobneusen* which they received from the Boers in Spelonken. Even the men were tattooed, but they shewed only one line of pimples on the median line of the face, from the forehead to the chin. Women had, in addition, two horizontal lines on the forehead and three on each cheek. It was a custom of the primitive population and is still kept by the Ba-Chopi. The invaders of the XVth or XVIth century adopted it because they were mocked by their subjects, who said : " Flat noses are

not right!" When the Ba-Ngoni of the XIXth century came, they submitted themselves to the custom, not from fear of being mocked, but to hide their Zulu nationality. Chaka had sent his impis to kill them and, as they were recognised by the absence of pimples, they began to tattoo themselves. When the danger was passed, they ceased to perform the operation. They began in their turn to mock the Thonga who followed their example.

Amongst the Ba-Ronga it is not certain that the big black pimples ever existed. In former times, men used to make two lines of small pimples on both sides of the body, begining from the nipple and from the shoulders downwards. Now the custom is dying out ; it is practised only by women, undoubtedly in connection with nubility or with marriage, in order to make themselves prettier... as they think! But the tattooing of the face has disappeared almost entirely. What remains is the tattooing of the shoulders and of the epigastric and hypogastric regions.

The operation is painful ; girls sometimes cry and must be forced to submit to it. The patterns are triangular. Four triangles are first drawn on the shoulders on both sides; the upper triangles meeting with the lower ones at their apex, so as to leave a square place, not tattooed, in the median region of the back. This drawing is made with ochre ; the skin is caught up and lifted with a little iron hook all along the line and slightly cut with a razor. All the incisions must be of the same size. The blood oozes out and is stopped by the ochre which is profusely spread over the small wounds. Tattooing of the back is not very painful. It is more so on the anterior part of the body. These four triangles are also drawn under the breast leaving a square place of which the navel occupies the exact middle. But between the two upper triangles two others are introduced thus making a conical shaped pyramid whose point comes between the breasts.

Such is the ordinary disposition of the tattoo pimples in Nondwane, but it varies considerably according to the clans, as the two adjoining plates clearly show. The two Nkuna women whom I photographed at Shiluvane in 1900, have only two lines

of pimples forming a right angle under their right breast, whilst, as regards the two Maputju girls, in the second illustration, the four triangles are distinctly seen, but arranged somewhat differently.

The freshly tattooed girl hides herself for a week, after which

Phot. H. A. Junod.

Tattooed women of the Nkuna clan.

she shows herself to her boy (shigango), who will kill a fowl for her to congratulate her. He says: "It is pretty to tattoo yourself. Otherwise your belly would be like the belly of a fish, or of a white person!" The time of healing is considered as a disease (perhaps as a marginal period). It is taboo to put salt in the food during those days, or to go to the village to eat the food of other peo-

ple (just as it is for boys who pierce their ears). Girls prepare themselves for the operation by eating a special food which softens the skin of the belly (nabyala khuri). All these rules tend

Phot. A. Borel.

Tattooed women of the Maputju clan.

to show that, in former times, tattooing had a deep meaning, a ritual value which has more or less disappeared. Mboza told me: "It is not a regular taboo (yila), but only a custom (shihila) of the country."

3) Pointing of the teeth (Ku hleta).

This custom is also dying out. It used to be incumbent on all the girls. Now many do not keep it. They have seen that teeth deformed in this way decay more quickly. The operation is performed on the incisive teeth, and girls must keep their mouth closed for two or three days, not showing their teeth to anybody.

Near Rikatla, the hleta custom is still in force in the heathen villages. It gives the girls a kind of canine aspect.

4) The milebe custom.

It is very widely spread all over South Africa. Though it has disappeared now amongst most of the Ronga clans, it is still practised in the Manyisa country, over the whole of Bilen and in the Northern clans, amongst the Zulu, the Pedi-Suto, etc. It is probably the origin of the famous " Hottentot apron ", which some ethnographers thought to be a congenital malformation and which is but the result of the custom (Note 9). It is a very ugly habit, very immoral from our point of view, fixing the imagination of the girl on sexual relations, but amongst the Thonga it is upheld as being quite the right thing.

B. MARRIAGE AND CONJUGAL LIFE

1) Conditions of Marriage.

In the primitive Bantu tribe every girl gets married, some, however sooner than others. Suitors prefer pretty girls to ugly ones! But what is their standard of beauty? The ideal is tall stature, strong limbs and well developed breasts. A proverb says : " Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi ". — " Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money "... It does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want suitors, will not consent to

let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than if she is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she ressembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is chubby cheeked, she is like a sow". A light complexion is prefered to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are considered as superior, and a native laying claim to any European or Asiatic blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the question of marriage, insist on two other points: the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch, the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear", so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 101). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *thluba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 120). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and chidbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork because pigs root nervously with their noses: the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would compromise the delivery. Other animals are taboo for girls: The *hare* because it is too cunning; and the antelope *nhlengane*. This antelope raises the foot when hearing a noise. Hence the idea that its leg is hollow and that it perceives the sound through it. The child would do the same, if its mother were to eat the meat of the nhlengane. It would be unable to hear with its ears, only with its hands!

The *fowls' legs* (tibias) are also taboo for all women, because the hen scatters the sand... So are the *hoofs of oxen, pigs'feet*. A woman eating them would walk too much... She would go everywhere to look for husbands !

It is taboo for girls to *walk amongst pumpkins plants* (maranga), to pluck the fruits. She is only allowed to pluck those which can be reached from outside. Were she to transgress this law, she would emit a bad odour and no boy would court her. Her mother, having no fear of being despised, can walk amongst the pumpkins. A second taboo relative to pumpkins is this : unmarried women must cut a " pumpkin nose " (nhompfu) viz. the end of the stem and fix it in their waist when plucking the pumpkins, lest they get abcesses in certain regions of their body.

It is taboo for them to eat cooked *oxen's blood (*bubendje).

The following taboos apply also to *married women*. They are not allowed to eat what is called *nkopfu*, viz. some parts of the bowels which are cooked together with the stomach of the ox. " It would spoil the child inside ". The *testicles*, which are generally given to the uterine nephew, when the meat is distributed according to the laws, and the *underlip* of any animal are also forbidden to them. So is also the *tongue*... because it is reserved for old people as a mark of respect ! The *rectum* (gobana) is taboo for women and children. Children might make incongruous noises from the rectum ! Women must abstain from *porcupine* and *monkeys' flesh* ; all their offspring would ressemble these animals... Such cases have happened they say ! Women must not eat *eggs* ; they would run a double danger : their child might be born bald and remain so ; or they might be like a hen which runs in all directions when laying an egg. They would have no peace in child bearing !

Nubile girls, during their " tiwheti ", must not *approach the oxen kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked by a bad cough (muhkulwane), get thin ! This taboo is instituted to protect the oxen, not the human beings, inhabitants of the village, as D. Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus.

When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish to !

3) The first year of married life.

I do not return to marriage rites which have been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and of adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute a proper sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire place of her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it seems as if the new husband were eating with her the whole year, so long as she has not yet her own pot (hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

After the honey-moon what are the relations between husband and wife ? Of course they vary very much according to the character of both. As a rule however, the married people show very little intimacy with each other ; the man remains with his companions on the " bandla ", the place of the village where they meet, and only comes occasionally into the "ndangu", the court of the fire place, which is the proper domain of the lady of the hut. The first wife is certainly the most respected ; she is called the " great one " (nsati lwe' nkulu) ; those who are taken in marriage afterwards being the " little wives ". She is the true wife and acts as such in some old

rites, those which accompany widowhood and the foundation of the village, as we shall see.

When speaking of divorce, we shall notice the principal causes of quarrels between married people and how they are dealt with.

As regards conjugal life, the sexual relations between husband and wife are regulated by many taboos. We have mentioned those following birth and the nursing period. Every month during her " tihweti" (hu koka), the woman is taboo (a yila), and these days constitute a real marginal period during which she is absolutely secluded from her husband. She must keep in the left half of the hut and not trepass across the median line. If she wants snuff, she is not allowed to go to her husband in the part in which he lies ; she must send a child to fetch the tobacco she wants ! During those days she sleeps on a special mat and puts on special clothing, the old ones which she had brought with her for this purpose on the day she first went to the conjugal domicile. When cooking, she must not touch the mealie meal with her hands, but with a spoon. A rich man who has plenty of spouses, and therefore plenty of food, will not touch the pot of the tabooed wife ! At the end of the period, she smears the floor of the hut and puts on her ordinary clothing (Note 10). This is evidently the aggregation rite by which the woman comes back to the everyday life (1).

5) Sterility.

In the Northern clans, when a woman does not conceive, a special sacrifice is offered, very similar to the one made by the Ronga on the day of the conclusion of the marriage. A goat is killed, a long piece, one foot in width, is cut from the skin of the animal in the ventral region, and three openings are made, one for the head and the two others for the arms. The

(1) For other details concerning the sexual life see *Revue d'études sociales*, p. 136-150.

three openings converge to a point where the astragalus bone of the goat is fixed to a strap. The sterile woman puts on this skin; the astragalus will be seen on her breast. She will also fix the gall-bladder in her hair and wear these ornaments for a time. In the intuition of the Thonga, it seems evident that children are given by the gods : hence the idea of a sacrifice in case of sterility. But in addition to the religious rite, native doctors have lots of drugs to militate againts this misfortune (1). The special porridge cooked for a sterile woman (mhika, shimhiko) is called *shiboleko* amongst the Ba-Ronga. The poor woman is despised.

Sterility can be a cause of divorce. The husband has the right of sending his wife home. But generally the parents of the woman find a *nhlampsa*, viz. a younger girl, and give her to the husband as a second wife.

6) Pregnancy and Miscarriage.

A special treatment is followed for the first pregnancy when the breasts begin to swell, a condition which is called *munyama* (darkness). The physician makes small incisions near the breast, and on the legs, and draws out a little blood. The pregnant woman also drinks a decoction for the same purpose, i. e. for removing the blood. The Thonga think that, as the menses are suspended, the blood accumulates in the body and must be taken away.

Pregnancy is not considered as a tabooed period. Sexual relations are allowed during that time, even recommended as favourable to the growth of the child (Note 11). However, in view of the impending birth, some special taboos have been added to those which apply to all women.

(1) A Pedi man told me that in his tribe the first thing to do was to ascertain if sterility were due to the husband or to the wife. For this purpose a little bit of the clothing of the husband and of the wife was cut off and put near a spider's nest. This spider is a kind of mygala of enormus size. If the spider took the piece of the husbands clothing down to its nest, it meant that he was in fault, and vice versa.

A pregnant woman *must not drink water when standig up*. She must kneel down, otherwise the water would fall violently on the head of the child and hurt it !

It is taboo for her to *wrap her body* in too much clothing. She must keep her belly bare and never throw her dress (kapulane) over her shoulders, lest the baby comes to the light with its head covered with the membranes, a complication which is very much dreaded by Thonga women.

She must not take *the sauce* of her porridge *too hot*. The child may be scalded inside and have black spots when born.

It is also taboo to *prepare the ntehe before the birth*, as no one knows what will happen. The child might die !

The future mother must not eat *pigeon's meat*, because the pigeons have no blood in the muscles of their breast. She would have no milk herself wherewith to nurse the baby. Nor must she even *look at a monkey*, lest she "takes to herself" (tekela) the form of the animal and the child will be like it !

As regards women dying during pregnancy, see page 166.

Miscarriages are very much feared amongst South Africans, not for themselves, but because they are accompanied with an uncontrolled effusion of a blood which is a terrible taboo. The discharged foetus must be buried in wet soil, otherwise the rain will not fall. The country having been polluted will be dried up by hot winds. A strange rite called *mbelele* is performed in times of drought, when all the graves of children born prematurelly and buried on the hill are searched, and their contents thrown into the mud, near the river. We shall discuss in our VIth Part the origin of this extraordinary idea. A woman who has had a miscarriage is impure for three months at least. Menses must have taken place two or three times, and have cleansed her before her husband can have any sexual relation with her. (Compare Note 6, which applies to the transgression of this rule.)

7) Parturition.

We have described the many taboos which accompany parturition when treating of the birth. The *busahana* period, from the moment of delivery till the fall of the umbilical cord, is very much dreaded. When a woman is suffering from *shilumi* (a disease which sometimes follows delivery, probably owing to a displacement of the organs) she must not enter the hut of a confined mother. The ailment would " jump over to her " (tlulela). There is however a way of preventing contagion. The visitor must take the piece of clothing which she uses as a girdle and throw it at the patient, and the patient throws back her own girdle to the visitor. Then she can enter : " They have acted according to the law, there is no more *yila* ".

A mother must not drink any milk from the birth of the child until its presentation to the moon. Afterwards she is allowed to drink only milk from cows which have calved many times.

8) Loss of children.

A woman who loses an infant (wa ku felwa) is deeply contaminated with the defilement of death. She must bury it herself without aid from the husband. Next day, she goes behind the hut, kneels down and milks her own milk on the ground. She does it until the secretion has stopped. This is taboo : her milk is polluted; no drop of it must fall in the gardens. She must avoid crossing the fields and going to the storehouses to fetch food. As long as she has not been " put right again (busetela)", she eats with a spoon. To use a spoon is a bad omen for a woman, because it reminds her of death. It is the reason why men adopt this civilized custom more readily than women. During her mourning, no sexual relations are allowed. When her menses again take place, she first keeps silent, and does not tell her husband. The second or third time only, she informs him of it. He then can purify her ; this is

done in the same way as for the widows. He buys new clothing for her and she resumes the ordinary mode of living. Everybody seeing her with this new attire will know that "she has been repaired". Should anybody else than the husband give her this clothing, the latter will be greatly offended and accuse her of having relations with a lover.

A man does not put on *malopa*, mourning clothing, for a child who was not yet of age. The woman alone does so. However a husband is always grieved at the death of his child and a sad event like this often leads to dreadful results. He will begin to think that his wife is a witch and has eaten her own child by her magical power. Such an accusation is almost sure to end in a divorce.

A woman who has *lost many children*, three or four, is considered as being in a special position, called *bovumba*, and there are many rules to be observed in order to deal with this "state of bereavement". Should a child be born after the death of many elder brothers, he must be carried in a *ntehe* made of a sheep's skin instead of an antelope or goat skin. To carry him in an ordinary ntehe is taboo. Should it be a boy, the mother will put girl's clothing on him, and vice-versa. The mother's breast will be smeared with a special medicine, because they are "breasts of the dead (mabele ya bafi)". The child, if he lives, will be weaned as early as possible and be taken to his grandmother. Two curious rites are also practised to protect it against bad luck. The first, the *kunga*, is a Ronga one ; the second, *ringela bovumba*, seems to belong rather to the Northern clans.

The *kunga* rite consists in presenting mother and child with gifts. When visitors come to see the new-born, the mother keeps silent till they have given her what they brought for it, a bracelet for instance. Old women having no means of buying a present, take a bit of grass and fix it in her hair. Then she consents to speak. She gathers all those bracelets and puts them on the ntehe, carrying them everywhere together with the child.

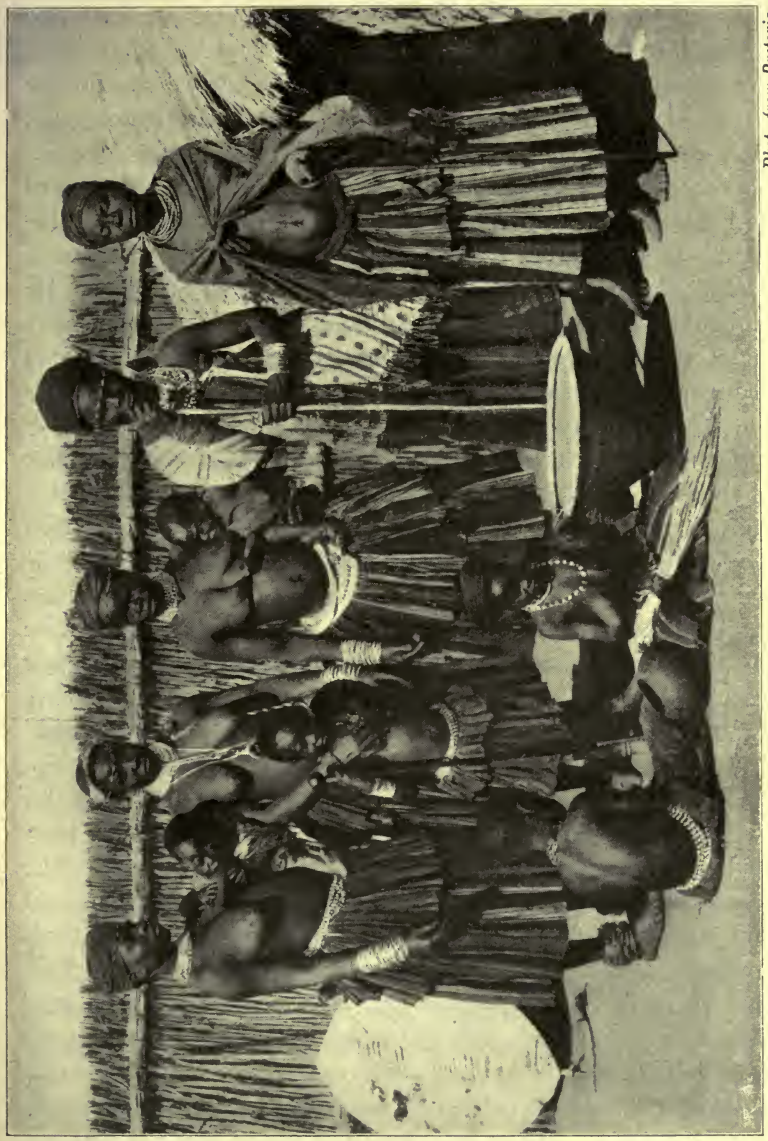
The rite of *ringela bovumba* was described to me by Mankhelu. When a woman has lost many children but has yet one alive,

she can ensure the health of her next offspring by the following means : she takes the living child, goes with it to her own parents ; there it is buried in the ash-heap up to its neck. Then somebody runs to the village, takes grains of maize and throws them at the child. Afterwards it is dug up, washed, smeared with ochre, and brought home ; this will put a stop to the death of children. *Ringa* means to *tempt ; ringela bovumba* to try to bring some influence to bear on the misfortune of the bereaved mother.

9) Adultery.

Amongst the Thonga *true* adultery for a man, married or unmarried (bumbuye), consists in committing sin with a married woman. Should he have relations with a girl, it leads to no consequence at all. Nobody will blame him, if the girl does not conceive... Should she have a child, he will only be forced to marry her; she will become his second wife. His first wife will not at all resent his bad conduct. Sometimes she will herself find him the girl he wants. There is nothing in her heart like the jealous dignity of an European spouse! She will keep all her capacity of jealousy (bukwele) for the time when the second wife comes to the village, and shares with her... the affection of the common husband ! Adultery with an unmarried woman is nothing more than "gangisa ".

But should a man have abducted a *married woman,* a woman who has a master (nwinyi), who has been paid for, then the matter becomes very serious. The husband is very clever in discovering her misdoing. As soon as he begins to have doubts about the fidelity of his wife, he chooses a friend and asks him to watch her. She is very cunning, her lover also ; but the friend is on the watch and catches them sometimes, perhaps in the bush, when she goes to gather fuel, or near the pool, where she draws her water. He comes back to the husband and informs him that he has caught them in the very act... Then the husband tells his wife that the proof is found and that she had better go at once to her lover and take something from his



Phot. from Pretoria.

Thonga women of the Transvaal.

hut; she obeys, and comes back with his blanket or anything else. It is " la pièce à conviction ". The husband goes with it to the counsellor who is in charge of his village; together they apply to the chief. The chief sends the counsellor who is watching the village of the lover to summon him. The confrontation takes place and the story of the case found out. The woman is questioned, confesses when, where, how many times he has sinned with her. If he denies, the object taken from the hut is exhibited. The adulterer is condemned by the chief to pay a *whole lobolola*, £ 15 to 20, as much as is necessary to buy a wife... He is rebuked before the whole assembly. " Should you have taken a girl, it would not have mattered at all. Why are you abducting a married woman ? Do you not know that it breeds bad blood (tindaba) ?"

The counsellor of the deceived husband goes to the counsellor of the lover to claim the money. The latter must go to the guilty man. Parents of the adulterer insult their son : " You see ! All this money lost now ! If only you had lobola a wife with it !" They must help him to find it at once, because this is a law universally recognised : the price of adultery must be forthcoming. (Nandju wa bumbuye a wu pfumali). The poor man will have to pay; he will even have to add a hoe to " drive away " (hlongola) the counsellor, who keeps it for his reward !

Why is adultery so strongly prohibited and punished ? Not at all from any moral consideration of purity, chastity, but for two other reasons. First a social one. Adultery with a married woman is a theft, because she is owned by a master. She is not punished herself, except when the watcher finds her out and gives himself the pleasure of thrashing her to his heart's content. The whole punishment falls on the man : he is the thief. But there is also a physical reason for it : the *matlulana !* Whe have already met with this word. *Tlulana* means to jump over each other, to compete with each other. In the sexual domain it is said of two men who have relations with the same woman. " They have met together in one life through the blood of that woman ; they have drunk from the same pool " (Viguet). This establishes between them a most curious mutual

dependence : should one of them be ill, the other must not visit him; the patient might die. If he runs a thorn into his foot, the other must not help him to extract it. It is taboo. The wound would not heal. If he dies, his rival must not assist at his mourning or he would die himself (See page 137). Should he even be the proper son (sometimes it happens that a son commits adultery with one of the younger wives of his father, which is considered as *biha*, very bad), he must not take any part in the burial, though he might be the regular "master of the mourning." Relatives will drive him away because they have pity on him, they know what misfortune threatens him. It is a frightful taboo ! There are medicines to remove this contamination : the *yila* is removed by them ; the *biha* (bad action) remains ! However in the case of the disease called *mpondjo*, (which is the lupus, I think), medicines are of no avail : should a man visit his rival, who suffers from it, he will die. We have also seen the terrible complications which are believed to take place at the birth of children, when adultery has had something to do with it. (P. 38.)

These great taboos show that there is a deep intuition amongst the Thonga that promiscuity of any kind is a bad and a dangerous thing. Even in the case of *gangisa*, boys are censured when two of them court the same girl.

10) Divorce.

Adultery is one of the causes of divorce. The guilty woman, instead of obeying her legitimate husband and helping him to get his compensation, may choose to go to her lover and live with him. This leads to an immediate divorce. The husband goes to the parents of the unfaithful wife and claims for his lobolo. These have perhaps no money to give. However they will try to get it as soon as possible, be it by the dissolution of the marriage of their own son ; they will perhaps send back his young wife to her parents and claim the lobolo payed for her, in order to meet the claim of the angry husband (See Part II). It seems it would be easier to go to the thief and claim from him

the lobola for the adulteress whom he has stolen (tluba). But a thief is not a reliable man! If he has stolen, it proves that he had nothing. (1) (See Appendix III.)

Divorce frequently takes place for more trivial reasons, for mere incompatibility of temper. Heathen men are often hard with their wives. They refuse to give them money to buy clothing. "They are stones," said one of these men to me. "Though you scratch a stone with your nail, the nail will break and the stone will remain!" On the other hand, women are by no means sweet, obedient creatures; therefore quarrelling often takes place. When she thinks she is persecuted (shanisa), the wife *runs home*. It is her great weapon. The husband heaves a sigh of relief... But very soon he becomes aware of his misfortune. No food, no cooked dish in the evening! His companions share their own food with him for some days, bnt they will not consent to feed him long. He will have to go modestly, humbly to his parents-in-law and ask his wife to return. Then they examine the matter and he perhaps receives a good scolding... It may be that the domestic life will improve. Both fear the renewing of the conflict. It may be also that the situation will grow worse and worse, and then it will lead to divorce, viz. the husband will claim for his money and, when he gets it back, the marriage is dissolved (ku dlawa ka bukati).

An accusation of witchcraft can also cause divorce, especially after the death of a child; so can also sterility as we have seen, p. 188. Gross selfishness of the husband can lead to it; many tales tell the story of a man who in the time of famine succeeded in killing an antelope, kept the meat for himself and did not give any to his wife and children. The wife noticed it and, when the famine came to an end, she invited all her relatives to a beer feast. Then she shewed them the bones of the antelope, telling them how badly the husband had treated her; her parents took her home together with the children. Sometimes the conclusion of the tale is that the man even lost his lobolo

(1) Women of low morals are called in Ronga gwababana, prostitute. There are plenty of them all round Lourenço Marques, where morality has sunk to a very low level; but this is the result of degeneration.

money, as a punishment for his bad deed! (See *Grammaire Ronga*, page 202. *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 260).

11) Widowhood.

When a man dies all his relatives are contaminated by the defilement of death, as we saw (Page 143). There are concentric circles, around him, some people being more affected than others. The wives form the first circle, especially the first wife. They have therefore to perform peculiar purifying ceremonies which throw a great light on the deep intuitions of the Thonga regarding life and nature. On the other hand they are the property of the husband's family and they are part of his belongings. How are they to be distributed to his heirs? This is a very delicate matter. It is more or less regulated by the tribal law. Hence two series of rites to consider, in the customs relating to widows: 1) The rites of purification, 2) the laws of repartition.

Let us describe first the fate of the great wife amongst the Ronga (See for supplementary details: The fate of the widows amongst the Ba-Ronga. S.A.A.A.S. 1909).

a) *The first day.* Manyibane is dead! What a sad event for his wife. She is called to inspect his grave. She assists silently at his funeral. But as soon as the younger brother of the deceased has finished praying, she bursts into tears and cries aloud! Her parents cry also: "Our child has fallen into misfortune! Now the cold has come for her! She will learn to know the cold water!" It is an allusion to the kind of life which the new widow will have to lead. Every morning she must go to the lake or the pool, with her companions, to have the whole body washed till the days of purification are completed.

The first of these purifying rites is performed just after the burial. The widow, surrounded by other women goes to the pool and there all must wash their bodies. Most of them return home at once. But the widow remains there with *other widows* who have lost their husbands in former years. They form a *secret society* which assembles only to receive new members into

it. Nobody must see the strange rites performed by them. It is a *Ngoma* (the same word as for the circumcision school). However the mysterious company takes possession of the great road (gondjwen), and everybody must take care not to pass along it at that time, for great misfortune might overtake the imprudent one who should approach too near and catch a glimpse of the proceedings. A wise man, when seeing the suspicious group, mourning women sitting on the main road, prudently stops and makes a long detour to avoid the place... What is done in this meeting? One of the widows makes an incision on the new member of the society, with a knife or a bit of glass in the inguinal region on the left side, "where the husband was resting". If the blood flows freely, it is a good sign. The women are satisfied; they say there was a good understanding between husband and wife; if the blood does not flow it is a bad omen. Then one of them lights a little fire with a handful of dry grass; this grass has been torn from the roof of the deceased's hut. A little excrement from a cock (not a hen!) is then thrown into the fire, and the widow must expose both hands to the smoke. These rites are very similar to the first circumcision rites, the incision performed recalling the ablation of the foreskin, and the exposure to the smoke, the jumping over the fire. These are great taboos. Evidently they are initiation rites, accompanying the passage from one condition into another.

After that, the company returns home. The other widows take every bit of clothing from their companion, tie a reed or a palm thread around her waist with some broad leaves attached to it. With this scanty garment, they bring her home. She walks surrounded by them. Somebody warns the men to get away from the road as they are not allowed to see the procession. They hide themselves in their huts. The widow is led to her hut, the hut of the great wife which has now been uncrowned. She must accomplish *the last crossing of the hut*. Entering through the door, she shouts loudly: "My husband! My husband! You have left me alone! What am I to do?" Then she goes out, not by the door but by the hole which has been made in the wall to carry the corpse to the grave. Behind

the hut her friends are waiting for her and give her back her old clothing, which has been washed in the pool and which she will wear again for two days. (1)

b) *The following days of the Great Mourning.* Without delay a new hut, a small provisional hut, is built in front of the mortuary one. Here the great wife will stay during the whole widowhood; the space between this and the old hut is more or less taboo and most of the possessions of the deceased are put there, under the roof near the door on the outside. (See illustration p. 159).

The other widows do not leave their huts, but they participate in the other purifying acts, the vapour baths and the general sprinkling of the fifth day. As regards the vapour baths, however, the first wife is associated with the grave-diggers, viz. she must be exposed to the strongest medicinal smoke while the inferior wives are cleansed with weaker drugs. They all put on the *malopa* and eat with spoons during the whole year of the widowhood.

c) *Provisional decision regarding the fate of the widows.* A few days after the Great Mourning, a new gathering takes place, not in connection with the defilement of death which is now cleansed, but *to fix provisionally the fate of the widows.* The sisters of the deceased have to play a special part in this gathering. They will lead the discussion with the widows about their new husbands. It is indeed a nice custom to let women decide on the subject. Not that they have an unrestricted power in the question. The law has provided a certain rule for the repartition and one seldom departs from it. However some liberty is allowed in the application, and modifications can better be made if pro-

(1) *The widowers* also form a similar society and undergo the same rites; but just as it was only the great wife who was subject to these laws, to the exclusion of the little wives, so it is only when he has lost his first wife that a man is initiated into the widower's society. After having buried her (he holds her head) he goes to the pool, washes himself, and another widower comes and makes the incision on him in the inguinal region. Then he throws away his *shifado* (Note 1.) and also accomplishes the same crossing of the hut in tears. These three acts constitute the proper widower's mourning: the vapour baths and *lahla khombo* are part of his purification as being the principal grave-digger.

posed by female intermediaries. Should the husband possess a harem (tshengwe), that is at least five wives, they will most likely be given to the following heirs: the great wife, being "the pole of the village", must remain in it and belongs to the younger brother (1) who becomes the master of the kraal. The second one goes to the second brother, the third one to the third brother, the fourth to the *ntukulu*, viz. to the son of the sister of the deceased. The fifth will then become the wife of one of the sons of the deceased. This might seem shocking and is really shocking even to the sense of the natives; but let it be remembered that she is the youngest of the lot; she has been taken when the father was already old, and the first son is perhaps older than she. As regards the elder wives, the first and the second especially, one would never think of keeping them for the son! Incestuous relations are very rare amongst the Ba-Ronga. Even in this case, the feelings of both parties are more or less respected. The men advise the son to begin to play with the young widow, to ask her jocularly for tobacco, and he gradually accustoms himself to consider her no longer as a mother (mamana) but as a wife (nsati).

Of course the general rule is apt to be very much altered according to circumstances. Should the deceased be the youngest of the family, his elder brother can be the heir of the first wife. But it is not the regular course.

The repartition having thus been decided, the sisters of the deceased call the widows and say to them: "You so and so, you shall give food to so and so (phamela manyana)." But then begins the fight. One of the widows, being old, might altogether refuse to have connection with any of her brothers-in-law. She might say: "I am taking my young son as husband" which means: I do not want to be the wife of anybody. Or she will say: "I choose the big tree of the village where my late husband has built his hut". This answer may mean two things.

(1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga, an elder brother of the deceased cannot inherit a widow. It is taboo. He is a father to her, not a husband. He sometimes takes the lead in the discussion, having no personal interest in the matter. (See Part II).

Either: I do not leave this kraal and I will stay here without husband; or, on the contrary, I consent to be the wife of the man who becomes the headman of the village, viz. the elder of the younger brothers. Another will say: "I love my *ntukulu* so and so". Should, however, the first wife desire to go to a man who does not live in the village, the family council will certainly object strongly to her wish, as her departure would mean the disappearance of the village. But in the case of the younger widows it is quite possible that an exception to the ordinary law would be allowed if they insisted upon choosing another husband. (1)

After all, this is but a preliminary consultation, and the men who are rejoicing at the idea of getting a new wife will perhaps be badly deceived later on, as we shall see. However the man provisionnally chosen as the future husband of a widow, will at once pay visits to her, "march to her" (ku mu fambela), according to the technical expression.

d) *The casting away of misfortune.* But before any new and happy life begins for the widows, they have still to go through a very hard trial. They must perform the *lahla khombo*, the throwing away of the malediction of death, and this is much more difficult for them than for the grave-diggers or the other members of the village. The main point in this strange act of purification is this: before a widow can become the wife of her new husband, she must have sexual intercourse with another man whom she deceives. Should she succeed in freeing herself from him so that the act will keep its ritual character, s. n. i. (see Note 2),

(1) What would be the case should the widow choose a husband outside her husband's family? To the mind of a heathen woman the idea would never occur. But suppose a Christian widow, having only married suitors, refuses to become their wife, her conscience forbidding her to contract a polygamic union. Her case would be very hard indeed, as I do not think her wish would be taken into consideration by heathen relatives. It would have to be brought before the White magistrate who would probably try to help the widow. I think that, even if the woman consented to submit such family matters to the European court, she would have to give the *lobola* or her children back to her brothers-in-law, and that might be an impossibility for her. It would be interesting to know how Native Commissioners proceed in such cases.

this man will take on himself the malediction of death, and she will be purified. Should on the contrary that man accomplish the whole act, the widow has failed and will return home with shame and in despair! This is the description of this sad expedition of the widows. It takes place a few days after the gathering just described. The men of the village send the widows away and tell them: " Go and scatter (hangalasa) the malediction through the country and get rid of it before some other misfortune happens to us". With their conical baskets on their heads, they all go, each accompanied by a friend, who will act as witness. They pay a visit to some distant relative and try to flirt with the men of the village. Their aim is clearly understood: morals are so dissolute that it is not difficult for them to attain their desire. (But the purifying act is useless unless interrupted abruptly before its completion). If the widow succeeds, she is full of joy, and comes back saying: " I have coped with the mourning, I have overcome it." Should she not succeed, she has then been " overcome by the mourning ". It is a serious condition, which can only be dealt with by special medicines. The man who has unconsciously purified a widow and who becomes aware of it, will also have recourse to the *nanga* to get rid of the pollution of death. The widows try to come back all together; they stand by the main entrance of the village and announce their success with the *mikulungwana* shouts, which mean at the same time joy and sorrow. Everybody meets them there, and they form a procession to the grave to tell the deceased what has happened: " You have left us in the open field; we have had to go through a painful trial; it would not have been so if you had not left us!" But, after all, this is a day of rejoicing and the men, the heirs to the widows, are particularly pleased. The same day the widows put on new undergarment and complete their purification by another steam bath.

At that time the mourning is said *to have ripened* (wupfile). The widow's hair has grown again. What remains is to *kill the mourning* (dlaya nkosi). It is done by the man who " marches to " or visits the widow. In the evening, he is allowed in her

hut: they make a fire in it, put into the fire two pills of a purifying medicine, expose their limbs to the smoke. Then they put it out with their own water, after which they can have sexual relations without harm. A certain time must, however, elapse before the adjudication of the inheritance takes place.

The description I have given of the *lahla khombo*, translating exactly the narratives of Mboza, Elias, and an old widower called Magingi, refers to the rite as it was performed in the normal fashion some twenty years ago amongst the Ba-Ronga. Now the customs change. There is, all around the town of Lourenço Marques, an agglomeration of natives coming from many tribes. Immorality has become dreadful there, owing especially to the alcoholic excesses, as a free and enormous sale of adulterated wine takes place in this region. The widows are sure to find there one hundred men for each one, when they wish to cast away their defilement. But in the promiscuity, the poison of syphilis makes terrible ravages. According to our medical missionary, 90 % of the natives are contaminated by that disease. When the men up country saw that their wives came back ritually purified but physically contaminated, they began themselves to accomplish the necessary act. It has become the general custom to such a point that, when a widow goes to Majlangalen, (such is the name of that hell of drunkeness and immorality), it is now said of her: "She will refuse to stay with her legal heirs!" However the law of the *lahla khombo nhoben*, to cast away the malediction in the bush, remains inexorable in the three cases where the defilement is considered as being of the worst kind: when the husband died from phthisis, from leprosy, or if the woman has had twins.

Old widows who can find no lovers may be purified by means of drugs.

e) *The year of widowhood*. Though the widows have found new husbands, they still remain in the old kraal. They must accomplish there "a full hoe", viz. a whole year of ploughing. In their new fields they leave the dry sticks of the mealies of the last year, in such a way that everybody passing by will know

at once that this is the field of a widow. But what they harvest this year will belong to the new husband. They have now the right to *fambelana*, viz. to go to each other. The suitor brings clothing to the woman, and the woman pays him visits with jars of beer. They belong more or less to each other. But the marriage of the inherited woman is not absolutely settled. Her final fate is not to be known before the last and most important act: the adjudication of the inheritance.

f) *The day of the adjudication of the inheritance.* This is a most typical ceremony prepared with great care, because the day is full of surprises and dangers. Every precaution is taken to avoid misunderstanding, and to bring the mourning to a peaceful and satisfactory conclusion. It is winter time; the mealies have been collected from the fields of the widows, the small cobs called *makunula* have been set apart carefully, as they have to be used especially to prepare the beer of the feast. The council of the family is again assembled and decides that the time has come. The divinatory bones are consulted. Should they be favourable, the ceremony can take place. The bones are asked again a number of questions: Who must take the mealies from the granary and put them in the pot to soften them in water? (first operation of native beer making). A newly married woman who has had only one child, is chosen by preference. Then one asks how long this softening must continue; who is to shout her *mikulungwane* to accompany the work; who will have to get the mealies out; which woman must give the first blow in the mortar to pound the softened mealies, etc.

All the relatives assemble in the mortuary village. One year has elapsed since the death, and the bitter feelings of mourning have passed. Nobody will miss the feast, certainly not the *batukulu*, viz., the nephews, sons of the sisters of the deceased. Some people might be disappointed that day, but one of those nephews might return home richer than when he left! Most of the relatives arrive before the great day, to help in the preparation of the beer. When the woman designated by the bones has given the first blow, all her companions start at once pounding with vigour: "Ghe-ghe-ghe-ghe", and they sing songs

of mourning. This is one of these songs and a very significant one :

> Hi rilo, hi rilo! Hi ta ku yini ku we, Hosi ndjina?
> We are weeping, we are weeping ! What shall we say to thee, King!

This king is without doubt Heaven, the more or less personal being who kills or gives life, and whom we shall often meet with in these pages.

The first of the ceremonies of that day is the sacrifice on the grave. The master of the mourning takes a pot of beer, and followed by the crowd, especially by the *batukulu*, goes to the place where the deceased has been buried. He stops there and prays : " See this jar of beer! We bring it to thee ; we have gathered to tear to pieces the mourning. We beseech thee that this ceremony may be performed in peace and good understanding ". Then he pours a little of the drink into the cup which is on the grave, the same which the deceased used when alive. One *ntukulu* then takes the jar, which is still almost full, and he drinks the contents with the other *batukulu*. This has been done calmly. But this act has made the *batukulu* bolder. They become troublesome. As soon as the crowd has come back from the grave, they steal another pot of beer. They insult the masters of the village. They say : " Why ! You have never sent us any notice about the decisions concerning the mourning! We are tired ! We will go and take our wives with us ! " But some of the old men go to them and say : " Be good ! Do not spoil the feast ! "

By the end of the afternoon all the relatives assemble near the door of the mortuary hut, and bring the goats which they have given for the feast. Here the true sacrifice, the living offering takes place, very much in the same style as the one described when treating of the crushing down of the hut (p. 158). The old man who prays, says : " See us here ! We have come together to conclude our mourning. May there be no noise, no misunderstanding, no anger amongst the *batukulu !* This is our ox (the goat). It has been provided by so and so. Many others have been brought. See ! You have died as a

great chief!" At this very moment a *ntukulu* rises and begins to insult the old man who is praying: "You have no concern for us! Why do you put us apart? You do not give us our wives! You are killing us!" And the other *batukulu* join in chorus. The end of the sacrifice and of the prayer is always the same in these big, religious, family gatherings: the *batukulu* steal the part of the victim set apart for the gods. The throng pursues them laughing, and pelts them with balls of *psanyi*.

The sun is now setting. All the men go to the central place of the village and sit round the fire. The widows remain on the spot, between the deceased's hut and the new hut of the great wife, where all the belongings of the late husband have been kept during the whole year. The other widows of the family surround them once more; no other woman is allowed to approach. The present ceremony is another secret rite of the company of widows. They sing the following mourning song to recall all the sufferings of the year of widowhood:

Angoma nkulukumba! Tatana a nga fa, a ba siya
Na ngoma a nga si ba byela!
Our secret law is a great law! Our father has gone, he has left them,
And he had not told them about that law!

During that song the old women take away all the clothing of the widows, and wash their bodies. Then they lead them into the hut of the great wife and put on them new clothing, the clothes which their suitors and other relatives have brought for them. When they are all seated, the sisters of the deceased proceed to the last distribution. They first ask the great wife: "You, to whom do you belong?" She answers: "He! Do you not know him? It is the man who has taken care of me, who was visiting me! I am choosing so and so!" She can say also: "I am killing so and so!" *(Ndji dlaya man)*. That means: "As I have killed my first husband, I might do the same for the second one", a very promising declaration! As soon as the widow has given her answer, the women in the hut start shouting loudly, and one of them goes out to the

men, and cries: " So and so says she kills so and so! " They proceed to ask another one : " You, whom do you choose?" The woman remains silent. " What do you mean? I do not choose anybody." — "How is that? Be sensible!" — "No! I do not want anybody!" — "Why?" They begin to press her : "You know well who has taken care of you, who has visited *(fambela)* you the whole year." — "I do not want him!" "How is that possible?" — "No, I do not want him. I want the *ntukulu* so and so. " A frightful noise is heard in the hut. They are all crying together. What has happened? Probably that widow was not pleased with the man to whom they had destined her. Seeing more of him during the year, her affection had not increased. On the other hand, she had some liking for one of the *batukulu*, and she arranged secretly with him, and perhaps also with his mother that she would keep silent till this day and then choose her nephew. It is quite possible that the mother of the *ntukulu* will say in that case: " Has this widow not been bought with the money which I secured for the family by my marriage? " Of course the official suitor objects strongly to this spoliation. He becomes angry. During one year he has given clothing to the ungrateful one. Things can grow so bad that the *ntukulu* carries off the fractious widow at once and says: " Good-bye ! I go with my wife ! " The old men will then follow him and implore him to come back. If they see that the woman is quite decided, they will allow her to go to the husband of her choice. They had better consent to it at once, because it happens not infrequently that the *ntukulu*, if repulsed that day, will go to the family of the woman and there claim the money (*lobola*) paid for her by the late husband, saying: " That *lobola* comes from my mother. If you do not give us our wife, if you allow her to stay with another man, then give us back the money." Or it might happen also that the widow, brought perforce to the house of a younger brother-in-law, will run away to the *ntukulu*, and the regular husband will be helpless. There is a saying to this effect: "A woman inherited cannot be forced." Of course such cases of conflicting interests cause a great deal of friction be-

tween members of the family, and the natives are very sorry about it; they try to avoid it as much as possible. But the desire of getting one more wife is so strong in the heart of a Ronga that such disputes are by no means rare, and the day of the adjudication of the inheritance is universally dreaded. However, one never goes as far as fighting, and if an uncle and a nephew have parted from each other on bad terms, they will very likely try to mend matters by the sacrifice of reconciliation (*hahlelana madjieta*), which is one of the nice features of the Ronga religion (See Part VI).

The widows are truly the most important part of the property left by a man. When they have been distributed, the minor possessions of the deceased are adjudicated. As regards *oxen*, *money*, they have been already remitted to the younger brother or, in his absence, to the sons. The younger brother will use them as a family property to buy a wife for his son or for the son of the deceased, when he comes of age. In the repartition of the implements which have been cleansed, but left lying on the ground in front of the hut up to this day, the *ntukulu*, viz. the principal uterine nephew again plays an important part. He has the right of *tjhumba*, viz. of picking out for himself one of the assagais of his uncle just as the maternal uncle takes (tjhumba) one pound from the lobola money (See Part II). Every warrior possesses at least two assagais, the big one which belongs in principle to the chief, and which must be inherited by the eldest son. The nephew takes the smaller one, but he must precede his cousin in choosing; in appropriating this weapon, he *surrenders* (nyiketa) the inheritance to the true heirs. This is a very characteristic expression. It seems as if he wanted to assert his right; but he takes the less valuable weapon and leaves the better one to the son. The explanation of this custom is probably to be found in the evolution of the family system which must have taken place amongst the Thonga (See Part II). In fact all the *batukulu* stand in a line and receive a portion of the property of the deceased, a knife, an axe, a small punch, etc. Women never inherit (a ba di pfindla). When no heir exists except female ones, they can receive something, but the valuable

property must be kept by them for their sons, the uterine nephews of the deceased. Why ? Because, in the intuition of the Thonga, a woman is not capable of possessing : she is not able to build an oxen kraal and to repair it ; how could she possess oxen ? The only thing she can do is to arrange a pig's kraal. Therefore she can own pigs but nothing else !

The end of the feast of the adjudication of the inheritance is the distribution of the flesh of the victims. The company breaks up, each party having received one of the limbs. They must eat it on their way home, somewhere under a tree, on the road, neither in the mortuary village, nor in their own kraal. It is taboo. Those who have received a wife go home rejoicing. When he has reached home, the fortunate husband kills a fowl or even a goat to make a fitting reception for his new wife. This is the end of the long period of widowhood, in which it is easy to discover all the sequence of the passage rites.

Such is the old normal way of reinstating a widow in society. But there are special cases where the rites are slightly different. If a widow is old and cannot expect to deceive a man, she simply buys medicines which are supposed to cleanse her.

The case of the wife of Sokis (see page 138, footnote 4) was more difficult. She had a baby, and sexual relations were consequently prohibited. Moreover the man who legally inherited her was in Johannesburg and could not provide for her purification. One of the grave-diggers took his place and "ran for her" (tjutjumela). This is a different expression for *fambela*. As far as I could understand, this man had ritual relations with his own wife in order to *lahla khombo*, to be purified himself. Then he tied the cotton string (boha nshale) round the waist of the widow. A sick widow will also be treated by *tjutjumela*. The grave-digger possesses the means of cleansing them, having gone through the mourning together with them.

These attenuated processes of purification seem the rule amongst the *Northern clans*. According to Viguet, the widows must also go to the bush (hula ni nhoba) to meet with a man who will free them of the defilement of death. The man who performs this act is called the *shikomho* of the widows. There are

certain individuals who make a real businesss of this. Knowing drugs with which to cleanse themselves (ku tirulula), they claim a reward for their help... The widows remove their mourning attire (bracelets of strings on that occasion), and return home adorned with beads. In the Djonga dialect the adjudication of the inheritance is called *pandja ndjaka*. It is not attended with a sacrifice. There seem to be some differences in the intuitions of the Ronga and of the Northern clans. For the first named the defilement of death contaminates the hut to a greater extent. It must be destroyed and the widow has to undergo the very hard casting away of misfortune (lahla khombo). For the second the impurity rests more on the village itself, which must accomplish the collective purification of *hlamba ndjaka*.

I must still mention a new custom which is spreading amongst the Ba-Ronga in the neighbourhood of Lourenço-Marques. When a widow objects to become the wife of the legal inheritor, she goes home and adopts another husband. There are plenty of men of other tribes, coming from Inhambane, Quelimane, Mozambique, who have no wife. They accept the proposal of the widow and go to live in her village. They are generally despised and called by the insulting name of *mugomo*, a Zulu word meaning an empty iron oil tin. They are as hard and unfeeling as such a tin! If children are born, they belong to the family of the deceased husband, who paid the lobolo.

Sometimes also a widow chooses a nephew who is still a child. She gives him food as if she were his wife, but she lives with another man whom she loves. It even happens that she may choose a girl, the daughter of another wife of the deceased.

C. OLD AGE AND DEATH

An old woman, having in some way gone out from the sexual community, enjoys some privileges which are taboo for her sisters still capable of childbearing. She is allowed to put on the clothing of the widows: contamination of death is not so

dangerous for her. She can proceed to the purification of the village, in certain cases of epidemic, and of the weapons of the warriors in war time (Part III). After the sacrifice of the black ram for rain, old women and small girls alone are allowed to eat the flesh of the victim.

But old and decrepit women are despised. As long as they still can till their land, they are treated with consideration, but when they have lost all their strength and must be fed by their children, they are looked upon as troublesome burdens. I must say that, as long as she still has an atom of vigour, a Thonga woman goes to her field and tills it. During all her life time she has contracted such an intimate union with Mother Earth that she cannot conceive existence away from her gardens, and she crawls to them with her hoe, by a kind of instinct, till she dies.

The death of the woman is attended with the same rites as the death of a man. I must mention, however, the custom of *mahloko*, which takes place when a woman still in her prime dies. Mahloko comes from *nhloko*, head. The explanation of this technical word is this: the parents of the woman say: "Our head (viz. a person belonging to us) has died; let us go to mourn her."

Let us first see how this mourning takes place *in the Ronga clans*.

If the two families were very friendly, the parents of the deceased will probably bring with them a little girl, saying: "This is our little green meat (mbuti), our little orange (rather sala, fruit of the nsala tree)." They offer her to the husband to take the place of the deceased wife and a new contract will be made. The widower will then at once pay a first part of the lobolo, £ 5 for instance, and, in the course of time, he will marry his sister-in-law. But generally the visitors are angry, and the mahloko ceremony is very unpleasant. It may be that the deceased wife had not been entirely paid for. In that case her parents will come at the end of the mourning to "claim the herd" (ramela ntlhambi).

But though there may be no difficult lobola matter in the way, uneasiness is felt, because the brothers of the deceased

cannot help thinking that their sister has been killed by witchcraft. It was not yet time for her to die; so she must have been bewitched by the husband's family, probably by her co-wives, who were jealous of her. When the Great Mourning took place, they hardly came to the mortuary village. One or two went to see their "head", and they mourned her in their own kraal. To day, day of mahloko, they assemble, throw bones to know who will have to speak, who will receive the mahloko money, whether the money has been bewitched? The whole company starts for the mortuary village, driving a goat before them. They sit down outside, in the bush with dark looks: there is no hut to receive them any more... They have been noticed by the inhabitants of the kraal. One of them, the salutor (mulosi), goes to meet them and offers them a shilling. They keep silence. He tells them the news of the village. They do not answer. He leaves them and comes a second time with a fresh present. Then they consent to tell the news of their home, but they do not enter the village. The same man returns to them a third time with £ 1; they refuse to accept it. He adds 10/. (£ 1.10 is considered the normal sum to be paid as a kind of fine by the widower to the parents of the deceased.) They refuse again : it is an insult ! Happily the *ntukulu* is there; he will act as mediator between the two families. The visitors summoned him on their arrival and he has been sitting with them the whole time. Is he not the son of their sister ? But before he went to them, his father has given him his instructions: "Tell them that I have not eaten your mother." The *ntukulu*, as we shall see, is very free with his maternal uncles. He has the right of teasing them, even insulting them. Seeing that they do not accept the money, he stands and gives vent to his grief, throws sand at them, tries to drive them away, weeps. "No ! Father has not killed mother ! He is not a wizard! She died a natural death!" They see his tears, and then consent to enter the village.

In front of the mortuary hut, all the belongings of the deceased wife have been piled up, together with the straw crown of the hut: her pots, plates, baskets, spoons, mortars, etc. The

brothers break everything. Should there be any new implements amongst them, they will perhaps give them to their nieces. Then they lift the roof of the hut and throw it into the bush. They pick up all the plaster of the walls and throw it away where they threw the roof. The sacrifice is then accomplished amidst the ruins of the destroyed hut. Whilst it is being prepared, women of both families insult each other. The female relatives of the deceased say to the women of the village: "You have killed her because she was a splinter in your eyes" (shilabi). The others answer: "Have you seen us kill her? Perhaps people do not die with you?" The *bukwele*, the special jealousy which almost always exists between co-wives, explains how it is possible for them to address such amenities to each other. But the victim is prepared, all the limbs cut off, the portion of the gods set apart. The elder brother of the deceased woman prays in these words: "My sister, go in peace, be not angry; because we love you, we have come to mourn you today. Do not say: We have not mourned you. Go to so and so (father, grandfather etc.), call them here, give us good sleep and good health, etc." The batukulu appropriate the offering and the mourning ends in laughter, dancing and drinking. The neighbours come and take part in the rejoicings.

When they return home, the mourners spend all the mahloko money in buying wine. They sometimes become quite intoxicated. Afterwards both families begin to resume visits.

This custom of the mahloko fine is so strong that converts still adhere to it. But they use to send the money to the wife's family, when informing them of the death, and no other ceremony is performed.

In the Northern clans the mahloko are also paid, but it seems that the family of the widower considers that it has the right of claiming the repayment of the whole lobolo, when the deceased wife has left no child to compensate for the loss. In Nondwane, though we are still in Ronga territory, when the woman dies shortly after marriage the lobolo must be repaid. Further North the procedure is as follows: the deceased woman is buried by her husband according to the ordinary rules; one year elap-

ses and a special feast is celebrated, similar to the "beer of mourning" (page 164), in the village of the wife's parents, where both families gather together and provide the necessary victims. It commences with a sacrifice in which the father of the deceased wife squeezes the *psanyi* of the goat on the assistants, insulting all the time the gods who have killed his child and made trouble between the two families. He ends with words addressed to the widower's relations: "I cleanse you from your misfortune". The widower's father does the same thing, insulting also his own gods, and every body rubs his body with the green liquid squeezed from the *psanyi*. Then prayer for new blessings and the offering of the sacrifice are made, as customary, and the proper juridic discussion takes place. Each family takes possession of a hut, the widower's family assembling as usually in the house of the deceased wife's mother, and the parley takes place through the go-between (tintjumi), as in the discussions which precede marriage. Let us call the husband's family A and that of the wife B. A sends two hoes to B as a notification: "Your child has died with us last year". B answers "All right! Then pay the fine for her head (nhloko). Because you had only bought her legs. Her brain, her head, her name was still ours." A sends five hoes to B, to pay for the brains of the deceased. B takes two of the five and sends them back to A, saying: "One of them is to cleanse you from the misfortune and we shave your head with the second one." A accepts the two hoes and returns home. Should the wife have died childless, there will be a second act to the procedure: A has "opened the door of the claim" (a pfurile nyangwa wa nandju). He will come back shortly to lodge it with B.

Here he is. Using his go-between (ntjumi) as a mouth piece, he says to B: "Look at us! We gather our ashes with our own hands and we dig water in small shells of sala, —viz. we have no wife to do this feminine work for us!" It means: "Please give us another wife or repay the money to buy one." If B happens to have a girl of age, he will say: "Do not kill us; we put a log of wood across the road" (hi hingakanya ntsandja). It means: "We have put something to prevent

you from coming to us as enemies. Here is a new wife for you. " A understands quite well and goes home satisfied. He comes back without delay and brings twenty or thirty hoes, which is a beginning of lobola payment. He says : " We thank you for the wife ". The girl then follows him at once, if she is of marriageable age ; if not, she stays at home until she is grown up, and during all this time her new husband provides her with clothing. When having gone to live with him she gives birth to a child, B comes to A and says : " Nwombekazi a yi ambi nandju ", viz. " A cow which has calved is not used to pay a debt ", that is to say : she must be paid for herself. This technical expression means therefore : As our daughter has given you posterity, pay the full lobolo for her ! A will certainly do it " hi bushaka ", on account of the friendly relation existing between B and himself. But if B has no girl to give in compensation, if he has no money, what will happen ? A will follow his oxen where they have gone, namely into the family of the girl who has been bought by B for one of his sons. This woman is for the widower his great *mukonwana*, the woman he fears the most in all the tribe. We shall see what will then happen when treating of the extraordinary relations existing between these two individuals. This wonderful story of the consequences of the death of a wife, so characteristically told by Viguet, provides us with an excellent opportunity for transition to Part II of this work, which will explain the relations between all the members of the Thonga family.

SECOND PART

THE LIFE OF THE FAMILY AND OF THE VILLAGE

Having followed a man and a woman from the beginning to the end of their existence, I now come to the Life of the Family and of the Village. Both subjects are in close connexion. As a rule, a village is but a family composed of the headman, the father, his wives, his children and the old folk which depend upon him ; but in many cases his younger brothers live with him, sometimes a son-in-law, even a stranger, and all these inmates compose the village, *muti*. (1) In the first chapter we shall consider the family in itself, its constitution, the system of relationship and in a second, the village, the concrete realisation of the family, its foundation, its main laws and the respective occupations of its members.

CHAPTER I

The life of the family

The kinship system of the Thonga and, I suppose, of all the Bantu is widely different from ours, and greatly surprises the uninitiated student who tries to understand it. It is a very

(1) Native villages are generally called *kraals* by South African colonists. This expression comes from the Portuguese word *curral* which means properly stable. I shall employ it to designate the enclosure where oxen are kept, the cattle-kraal, but it does not seem right to apply it to the *muti* which is a *village*, however small and poor it may be. Portuguese call native villages *povoação*.

complicated matter indeed. In *Les Ba-Ronga* I have given the genealogy of Tobane and tried to sketch the system, and even to explain it. I cannot say this first attempt has entirely satisfied me. Therefore I devoted a considerable time to the study of the subject since then, working out genealogies of Gana, Viguet, Mankhelu, Mboza. I was led to the conclusion that there is a very remarquable uniformity in the family conceptions all over the tribe, but also that the matter is even more difficult than I first thought. It is a tangle extraordinarly difficult to unravel. I had believed that is was composed of two threads only, twisted together and knotted a hundred times : the lobola and polygamy customs. But I saw that many other threads were entwined with these : remnants of an ancient state of society where the mother-right was prevailing, and perhaps traces of the old group-marriage system which is still alive amongst Australian natives. My aim is more modest to-day. I do not pretend to explain everything, but to present a wider, more complete statement of facts, which I offer to professional anthropologists in order that they may fix the place of the actual system of relationship of the Thonga in the evolution of the human family.

A. COMPARISON OF THONGA AND ENGLISH TERMS OF KINSHIP

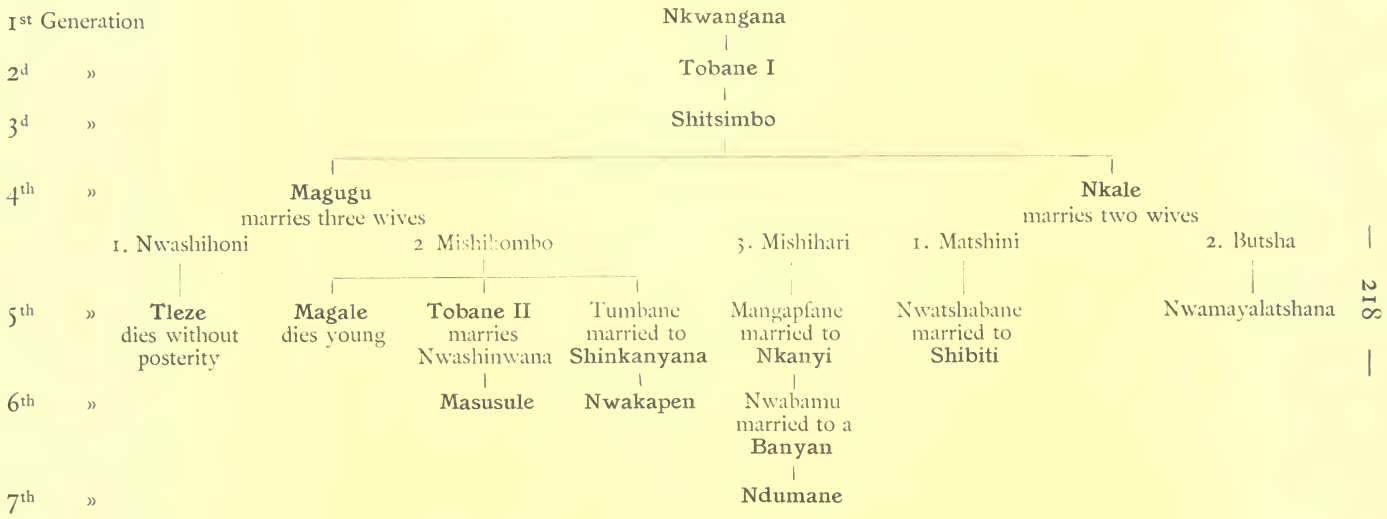
As an introduction into the mysteries of the system, I will first give the native names for the terms of relationship mentioned by professor Frazer in his questions.

Father, tatana. Mother, mamana. Brother, makwabu (wa matlhari of the assagai (1) Sister, makwabu (wa shihundju, of the basket). Husband, nuna. Wife, nsati. Son, ñwana (wa wandjisanyana, boy). Daughter, ñwana (wa wanhwana, girl) plur. bana.

Father's father, kokwana. Father's mother, kokwana. Mother's father, kokwana. Mother's mother, kokwana.

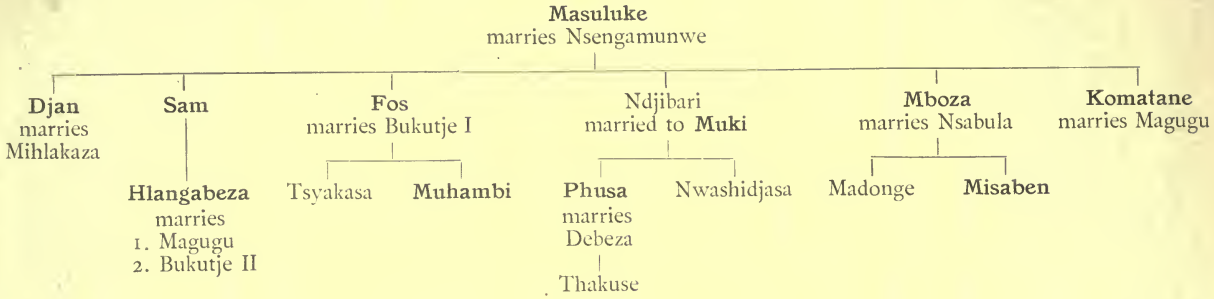
(1) Wa matlhari, "of the assagai" means male; " wa shihundju ", " of the basket " means female, as these objects are those which characterise each sex.

A. Genealogy of Tobane

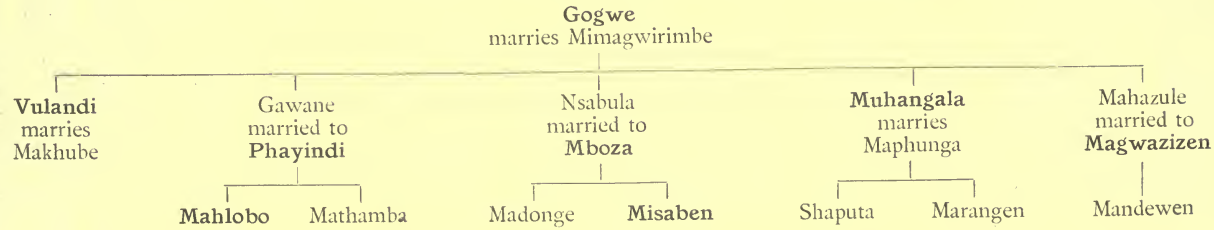


Mishikombo has two brothers, **Shigwalati** and **Mahwayi** and one sister Budiulu. **Shigwalati** has one daughter, Mintshale. Nwashihoni has a brother, **Madyondjo** and a sister, Ntungwen.

B. Near Relatives of Mboza



C. Near Relatives of Nsabula Migogwe, wife of Mboza



N. B. The names of the male members of the family are printed in **dark type**.

Father's brother, tatana. Father's sister, rarana (Ro.), hahana (Dj.).

Mother's brother, malume (Ro.), kokwana (Dj.). Mother's sister, mamana.

Father's brother's wife, mamana. Father s sister's husband, namu; mukonwana for a man, nuna for a girl. Mo ther's brother's wife, nsati for a boy, kokwana for a girl. Mother's sister's husband, tatana.

Father's brother's son, makwabu (wa matlhari). Father's brother's sister, makwabu (wa shihundju). Father's sister's son and daughter, makwabu.

Mother's brother's son: for a boy, makwabu and ñwana; for a girl, mamana, makwabu.

Mother's sister's son and daughter, makwabu.

Son's son, ntukulu. Son's daughter, ntukulu. Daughter's son ntukulu. Daughter's daughter, ntukulu.

Wife's father, mukoñwana, tatana Wife's mother, mukonwana, mamana.

Wife's sister: elder sister, mukoñwana ; younger sister, namu.

Wife's sister's husband, makwabu.

Husband's father, ñwingi. Husband's mother, ñwingi. Husband's brother, if older than the husband, ñwingi, if younger, namu. Husband's sister, nhombe.

Elder brother, nhondjwa, hosi ; younger brother, ndjisana. Elder sister, hondjwa, mamana ; younger sister (if married to the same husband) nhlantsa. Sister's son, mupsyana (Ro), ntukulu (Dj.). Sister's daughter, ntukulu.

Wife's brother's wife, mukoñwana lo' nkulu, the great mukoñwana. Elder brother's wife, namu. Younger brother's wife, ñwingi.

Grammatically speaking, most of the Thonga terms of kinship belong to the class mu-ba, the personal class. They make their plural in *ba* (batatana, bana, bamakwabu, batukulu). Some however are of the class yin-tin which comprises mostly animals, but also names of trades and of family relations: Ndjisana, nhondjwa, namu, nhombe, nhlantsa make their plural in *ti*. The five following terms, Tatana, Mamana, Rarana, Malume, Kokwana, are treated as proper nouns when they are used as such. For instance when I say Tatana, it means *my* father, the one to whom this term applies par excellence. In this case Tatana is not preceeded by the initial vowel *a* or *e*, which is always prefixed to the common nouns (See Elementary Grammar ot the Thonga-Shangaan Language, page 26 § 65). When I want to say "his father", I should say: Atatana wa kwe (Ro.), or Etata wa yena (Dj.) etc.

B. EXPLANATION OF THONGA TERMS OF RELATIONSHIP

Let us go deeper into the study of each of these terms, trying to ascertain their principal and derivate meanings. We shall consult the three adjoined genealogies, those of Tobane (A), of Mboza (B) and of his wife Nsabula (C), endeavouring to ascertain not only the social but also the moral relation existing between these several people. There are two kinds of relationship: blood relationship or consanguinity and marriage relationship, relationship on the wife's side or affinity. Amongst blood relatives, there are two categories which differ more from each other amongst Bantu than amongst us, relatives on the father's side and on the mother's side. On the father's side, the relatives are called bakweru (Ro.), barikweru (Dj.), those of our home; and on the mother's side, bakokwana, the ancestors.

We shall consider each of these three relationships separately, though it will be found impossible to isolate them entirely from each other. In each of them, we shall find two sets of terms: terms of correspondence and of reciprocity. We shall see also that these appellations are expressive of many different things, one of the main considerations dictating them being the right of a man to marry his wife's relatives, or to inherit the women belonging to his own family.

I. *Blood relationships.*

The general term to indicate this relationship is *bushaka* (from *shaka*, *mashaka*), relatives.

1) Relatives on the father's side.

(Bakweru : *ku*, at, *eru* possessive pronoun of the first person plur. means *with us*, in our home.)

Let us first consult Tobane, called Tobane II in the genealogy.

He calls Magugu his father, *tatana*. The relation implies respect and even fear. The father, though he does not take much trouble with his children, is however their instructor, the one who scolds and punishes. So do also the *father's brothers* who are also called "batatana ba shirare": his elder brother who is a "great father" to Tobane, and his younger brother Nkale, "tatana lwe'ntjongo", a "little father". Their wives, Matshini for instance, are mothers to him, though he can eventually marry them by inheritance. The cousins of the father are also fathers (Muhambi for Thakusa, for instance, Gen. B.), as long as the father calls them brothers.

There is another term for father, *rara* in Djonga, *roro* in Ronga; roro is only employed with the possessive pronoun under the three following forms: rorwa'nga, my father, rorwa'ku, your father, rorwa'bu, their father. The correlative term of tatana is *nwana*, son or daughter.

Tobane II calls Shitsimbo *kokwana*, grandfather, Tobane I kokwane wa tatana, grandfather of father, and Nkwangana kokwana wa kokwana, grandfather of grandfather. The expression tatana wa kokwana, father of grandfather, is never employed. The great grandfather and the great great grandfather are sometimes designated as follows: he who does not see his grandson when he has been sent by the women to carry food; the boy eats it on the way and the old man does not notice it! (Page 172). These ancestors call Tobane *ntukulu*, grandson. He is the true ntukulu of Shitsimbo; for Tobane I, he is the *ntukulu wa shikandjatjolo*, "the one who sits on the knees"; for Nkwangwam, the *ntukulu wo shikandjamirombo*, a word which seems to mean "the one who sits on the toes." In Djonga there is one more of these curious expressions applied to batukulu, *ntukulu wa shingube*. "In pronouncing that name", says Gana, "my great grandfather points near; in saying *ntukulu wa shikandjatjelo*, he points further down." To understand this properly, we must imagine the following patriarchal scene: a very, very old man is sitting on the ground, holding his son (ñwana) in his arms, putting his grandson (ntukulu) on his thigh, his great grandson (wa shikandjatjolo) on his knees and

his great great grandson on his toes. The fact that these terms have become almost obsolete shows that the system of counting descent from the father is at any rate very old in our tribe. There must even have been a time when the ancestors of the paternal line were better known than now. The wives of these bakokwana are also bakokwana, just in the same way as their husbands.

The father's sister is *rarana* (Ro.) *habane* (Dj.). The two words are the same as *r* changes often into *h* in Thonga phonetics ; the prefix of the first class now dropped, *mu* or *n*, may have caused this change. Rarana approaches very closely rara, father. It is employed under this form when it means *my* aunt. When one wants to say your aunt, his aunt, rarana becomes rarakati wa ku, rarakati wa kwe. This word means exactly female father. (See the value of this suffix *ati*, page 35, foot note.) Tumbane is rarana of Masusule. Masusule, for her, is also nwana. He shows her great respect. However she is not in any way a mother (mamana).

Any female being a near relation of my father or of my paternal ancestors, is also by extension a rarana : the daughter of my paternal grand-uncle, for instance, who are sisters for my father, etc.

The husband of my paternal aunt is neither a father nor an uncle, but a *mukoñwana* or *namu*, brother-in-law, because, as we shall see, he has a kind of prior right to marry my sister. (Shinkanyana versus Masusule, Gen. A ; or Muki versus Muhambi, Gen. B. For Madonge, Muki is *nkata*, husband, on account of this eventuality. He is a potential husband for her.)

Tobane II calls Tumbane *makwabu ;* this term, which is reciprocal, means brothers as well as sisters. If one wants to specify, one adds to makwabu : " of the assagai ", or " of the basket. " It is never employed except when united with the possessive pronoun : *makweru* means my brother, *makwenu* your brother, *makwabu*, his brother or sister. The elder brother is called *nhondiwa* (plur. tinhondjwa). The nhondjwa is also called *hosi* (plur. tihosi) chief. The hierarchy of age is very strongly maintained amongst the Thonga. The elder brother is treated with great

respect and gives orders to his younger brothers with almost the same authority as the father. It must be noticed also that the position of elder brother is not only a matter of age but, in the polygamic family, all the children of a first wife, or of the first house, are *tihosi* to the children of secondary or posterior wives or houses, though they may have been born after them. They take precedence of them. Amongst girls, an elder sister is often called *mamana*, mother, whilst an elder brother is never a tatana (father) but a hosi (chief).

The term *makwabu* is applied to all my first and second cousins who have the same paternal grandfather, or great grandfather, as I have. Cousins on my mother's side are also bamakwabu, some of them at least, those who are my maternal aunt's children. But cousins on the father's side are more fully bamakwabu than those on the mother's side : Muhambi is more so to Hlangabeza than to Mahlobo, because the two former belong to the same shibongo, family name; they are men of the Makaneta clan and Muhambi could therefore inherit Hlangabeza's wives ; Muhambi and Mahlobo are not of the same clan, and could not inherit from each other. In this fact we begin to see that the laws of inheritance, and especially the laws of the repartition of the widows amongst the family who has bought them, bear an intimate relation to the system of relationship.

The man who has married my wife's sister is also a makwabu for me, a nhondjwa if he has married her elder sister (Phayindi for Mboza), a ndjisana if the younger (Magwazizen for Mboza). The brother of Phayindi and Magwazizen are also called brothers by Mboza.

2) Relatives on the mother's side.

Tobane II calls Mishikombo *mamana*, mother. She is his true mamana and this relation is very deep and tender, combining respect and love. Love however generally exceeds respect. The proper word for tenderness is *tintsalu* which comes from *tsala*, to beget, and the mother is often called *ntsele* (a term which is applied also to the female of all animals). It is the word

which answers best to the feelings of a mother for her children. She is generally weak with them and is often accused by the father of spoiling them.

The mother's sisters are *bamamana* in the second degree, because, if the true mother dies, one of them will probably take care of the children. Their husbands are *batatana :* Phayindi is tatana for Madonge and Muhambi. He calls them *bana*, sons. Mboza is also a tatana for Mahlobo and Mathamba, being a makwabu, brother of their father, owing to the fact that he and Phayindi have married sisters.

All the co-wives are also *bamamana*, mothers by polygamy, (Nwashihoni and Mishihari for Tobane). They are *bamamana ba shitshengwe*, harem mothers. I respect them but they are further from me than mother's sisters. A more familiar term for mother, corresponding to roro, father, is *ñwa*, a word always used with the possessive pronoun and only in the second and third person : ñwaku, your mother, ñwakwe, his mother. Nwaku is employed in certain insults and oaths, and is to be avoided as being vituperative.

Many other women are mamana : the wife of my paternal uncle (Magugu for Muhambi), though I can inherit her in certain cases ; the daughter of my maternal uncle, (Shaputa for Misaben), without mentioning those women of my wife's family who can be so called. An elder sister is also mamana to her younger sister, and sometimes a husband calls his wife mamana. (1)

If the mother's sister is a mother, the mother's brother is by no means a father. He is called *malume* or *kokwana*, and here we meet with one of the most characteristic features of the Thonga, and even Bantu, system of relationship. The term

(1) The term mamana is frequently used by an interlocutor, without any idea of relationship, when speaking to married women of a more advanced age than himself. Such an extended meaning is also frequent with tatana, kokwana ñwana. Any man older than I am can be addressed by me as tatana and will answer me calling me ñwana. If the difference of age is greater, we shall treat each other as kokwana and ntukulu. Speaking in the third person a child will always put tatana before the name of any grown up man, though he belong to a totally different clan. Women round Lourenco Marques often

kokwana means first the paternal grandfather and all the ancestors on the father's side, and this is its proper essential meaning. The bakokwana are also all my mother's male relatives: her brothers, fathers, uncles, etc. They form a group which I call "ka bakokwana" which means "my mother's home", just as *kweru* means my father's home, my official home. Kweru comes first; ka bakokwana next. "The bushaka on the father's side is the head; on the mother's side, only the legs" (Mboza). Let us remember that a child lives at his father's home and only goes on a visit to his mother's village. He may stay there for years after the weaning but should he choose to settle there, he would be made fun of and severely censured by his father and his paternal uncles. "You are stupid, they would say, you leave your own village, you go to the village of your bakokwana to increase it! This is true folly. Has your mother not been bought with money? The children she bore belong to your father, just as the calves of his cows." (Mboza). But if the home of the mother can not become the home of the children, the relations they maintain with their bakokwana are of a much freer, more agreeable and kindly nature than those with their father's relatives.

The Zulu designate the relatives on the mother's side by three terms: *Gogo*, the maternal grandfather or grandmother, *malume* the mother's brother, and *muzwala* the son or daughter of the maternal uncle. The Pedi-Suto also know malume and muzwala. The Thonga of the North do not make any distinction: all of these relations, at any rate the maternal grandfather and the maternal uncles, are called indescriminately kokwana and this sometimes leads to confusion. (1) The Ronga dialect makes

call a White man nkata, husband. This shows that kinship terms are employed as expressing moral relations as well as blood or family relations, and one must not draw hasty conclusions from the way in which these terms are applied, and necessarily see therein the traces of a previous social state in which every grown up man or woman was considered as true father or mother. The Thonga may give to those terms an extended meaning. Nevertheless they differentiate perfectly well their technical and their derivate sense.

(1) For example in "Les Ba-Ronga", page 394, the ntukulu who steals the offering is *not* the grandson but the uterine nephew.

a distinction between kokwana, maternal grandfather, and malume, mother's brother; but people often call the malume kokwana. In the Northern clans the *uterine nephews*, viz. the sons of my sister, are always called *ntukulu* which is the term corresponding to kokwana, as we have seen; amongst the Ba-Ronga, they bear a special name-*mupsyana*-which seems to be becoming obsolete, being often replaced by ntukulu. (1)

Let us consider these various relatives on the mother's side.

The maternal grandfather, is the great, the true kokwana. He is respected for his age. However he is more lenient to his grandson by his daughter than to his grandson by his son. If the first one spoils any thing, he will say: "That is no business of mine. Let the father of the child scold him as he does harm to his property. I have nothing to do with their affairs. It is not my village." But were it his grandson by his son, the question would be totally different, and he would be hard on him. However should a child take too much liberty with his kokwana, the old man will say to him: "Go and play with your malume". The malume, indeed, for his uterine nephew, is quite different from any other relative. No respect at all is necessary towards him! "You go to *bombela* in his village; you do what you please. You take all the food you want without asking permission. If you are ill, he will take special care of you and will sacrifice for you" (Viguet). In the Ronga dialect this bombela is called *nyenyela*. "When the mupsyana goes to his maternal uncle, accompanied by his comrades who scent a good meal, the wives of the malume call him: "Come along, husband (nkata)! Look here, your malume has hidden some food in the back part of the hut (mfungwe), behind the large basket (ngula). Go and take it." The boy steals the food, runs away with it and eats it to the last bite with his friends. The malume comes back and is angry. But when he hears that the trick has been played by his mupsyana, he shrugs his shoulders and says: "He! It is all right if this has

(1) This is one of many proofs that the Ronga clans have preserved some old customs better than their Northern compatriots. Their language also possesses certain archaic features which are wanting in the Northern dialects.

been done by the ntukulu ! A shi biwi ntukulu ! The nephew must never be beaten ! " When another day the nephew comes again, the malume says : " You have killed us the other day by famine ! " — " Is there any more food handy that I may do it again ? " answers the boy.

Sometimes the malume himself points to one of his wives and says to the ntukulu : " This is your wife. Let her treat you well ! " This woman much enjoys the situation, which she finds quite entertaining. She makes a feast for the ntukulu and calls him *nkata*, husband. It goes so far that sometimes the nephew says to the uncle : " Please make haste and die that I may have your wife ! " — " Do you intend killing me with a gun ? " says the malume... But all this talking is mere joke. The nephew can take many liberties with this aunt, especially in the Ronga clans. He will never have relations with her during the life of her husband. Should he do so, he will have to pay the high fine of a true adultery. Possibly he will inherit her when the malume dies, but she will not be his full property : she will only be given (nyika) to him, and the children will eventually belong to the malume's male relatives. All over the tribe this right of inheriting a malume's wife is recognized. However in the Northern clans she is called *kokwana* ; in Ronga territory she is called kokwana by her nieces only, but her nephews call her *nsati* (wife), and this term seems also to be an old feature of the relationship system. This relation of malume and mupsyana is so important that I intend to treat it more fully later on in a special paragraph, when considering the traces of older forms of family life amongst the Thonga.

The true malume is the mother's true brother. But all her half brothers are also bamalume in the second degree ; so are also the brothers of the true malume.

What about the *children of the malume*, my cousins, sons and daughters of my mother's brothers, viz. Shaputa and Marangen versus Madonge and Misaben ? The relationship is different for Misaben, a boy, and for Madonge, a girl. For Misaben who is a boy, Shaputa, his cousin, is mamana and she will call him son, ñwana, because, as we shall see, Shaputa is a potential wife for

Mboza, father of Misaben, and Mboza calls her nkata, nsati, namu. For Madonge who is a girl, Shapute is also a mamana; but the term makweru, my sister, is more frequently used. So we find this strange fact : Maphunga, the mother of Shaputa is a wife for Misaben and Muhambi, while her daughter, Shaputa, is a mother for them !

As regards the son of my malume, he is also a malume or a kokwana, though he may be of the same age or even younger than his cousin, because he holds a superior position : he has the right of offering sacrifices for his ntukulu, as we shall see. Totally different is the relationship between Misaben and Mahlobo and Mathamba, *children of his mother's sister*. They are *bamakwabu*, as truly as the children of rarana, the paternal aunt, because they have suckled from the same breast (ba yanwele bele djinwe).

At this point of my treatise, I may remark that, if *ntukulu* is the term corresponding to kokwana, there are many kinds of batukulu, just as there are many kinds of bakokwana the *ntukulu wa shinene*, grandson by males, my true grandson, son of my son, is opposed to the *ntukulu wa shisati*, grandson by females, viz. the nephew, son of my sister. Both are on the same line in the native mind and both have an equal right to inherit widows.

3) Relationship on the wife's side (Bukoñwana).

I have been fortunate enough to obtain from Mboza a full nomenclature of his wife's relatives. It happens that the Gogwe family was very complete indeed. Nsabula has both an elder brother and elder sister a younger brother and a younger sister. Owing to this, I have been able to study all the possible kinds of relationship of Mboza with his wife's relatives.

Mboza calles Nsabula *nsati* (a term which corresponds to *nuna*, husband), or *nkata* a reciprocal term, or *nkosikazi*, queen, or *mamana*, mother, or *ntjibeli*, cook, etc. I have already described the moral relation which the word implies : no very great tenderness, not much intimacy, but a certain love mingled with

respect, even fear, because a wife can bring her husband into any amount of trouble if she begins to quarrel and runs home; then all the bukoñwana relations will be spoilt by endless discussions. Hence a peculiar feeling of uneasiness which is always allied to this word *bukoñwana*. Bukoñwana means, in an absolute sense: the relationship on the wife's side, and also in a local sense (as the prefix *bu* often does) the village of parents-in-law. These are the bakoñwana (sing. mukoñwana). The root of this word koñwana is unknown and this is a great pity. One often says: to go *bukoñwanen* (locative) or under an abbreviated form *bukwen*.

The term *mukoñwana* is applied: to the wife's mother, to the wife's father, to her *elder* brothers and sisters, to the women whom my brother-in-law has lobola by means of the money which I gave for my wife. Younger brothers and sisters of my wife are *balamo* or *tinamu*, and this word implies as much ease and liberty in the relations as mukoñwana means respect and even fear.

There are still three other terms of marriage relationship, all correlative terms, and they are: *Nwingi* a word by which my father and my mother designate my wife and vice versa. (Masuluke and Nsengamunwe versus Nsabula and vice versa); *nhombe*, a term by which my wife and my younger sister call each other (Mehlakaza and Ndjibari); *bakhotikulobye*, a reciprocal term by which parents of a husband and of a wife call each other (*basevele* in Djonga). But it is necessary to make a more complete study of the meaning of these terms.

The wife's mother seems to be the principal mukoñwana, at least during the first years of married life and specially in the Northern clans. Let us hear Viguet: " By the betrothal, as soon as you have been accepted, you enter into a new kind of respect and you must remain in it till your death. Should you meet your mother-in-law on the road, or your great mukoñwana (see later on), or the sister of your mother-in-law, you leave the road, you enter the bush on your right side. They do the same. Then you sit down according to men's fashion crossing your legs. They sit down also bending their legs, putting one

knee over the other as women do; then both parties salute each other, you, as a man, clapping your hands against each other, holding them parallel, and the women holding them at right angles. Then you begin to talk... Suppose you reach their village without having met them; the girls come; they are your balamo; you can play with them; they take your sticks and lead you to the hut of your mother-in-law, your wife's mother. Should she have died, the house which will be put at your disposal is the hut of your great mukoñwana. There they spread mats on the floor. The mother-in-law comes near the wall but does not dare to enter. She sits down outside and, without seeing you, she salutes you: "Good morning son of so and so"... She would not dare to pronounce your name! And she goes. Later on, when you have been married for many years, she will have less fear and enter the hut to talk with you".

Amongst the Zulu the respect is still greater. "When you see your mother-in-law passing before the hut, should you just be taking your meal, you must throw away the mouthful you were eating; and she does the same. A man covers his face with his shield when he happens to meet her unexpectedly. At any rate you must never pronounce her name. You must say: "Daughter of so and so", because your wife would be angry and say: "How dare you? Has she not brought me forth? Rather say mother!" In fact a son-in-law often calls his mother-in-law *mamana*, especially in later years of married life.

Why this wonderful respect? An old Thonga, Abraham Mabanyisi, said to me: "Because I shall never marry her. Such a thing has never been seen". I mention the explanation without comment.

But the fear is still greater when dealing with the *great mukoñwana*. The woman who bears the title, is the wife of my brother-in-law, the one whom he has lobola with my oxen. (For Mboza it is Maphunga, bought by Mahangale with the money paid by Mboza to buy Nsabula.) This woman stands in a special relation to me and to my sister whose oxen I used to buy my wife. These two women are true *nhombe* to each other. A

great mukoñwana in the second degree is any of the wives of my younger brother in-law. If I meet her on the path, coming with other women, she hurries on to avoid me. Her friends remain and chat with me. Should she travel with me and we must cross a river, she will not enter the same boat, if she can help it. Should no one be there to bring me food, she will do it reluctantly, but she will watch my hut and put the dish inside when I am away. As for me, I shall not eat anything while she is near. Why all these strange customs? One of the explanations, (I will not say it is the only possible one), is this: this woman having been obtained with my oxen, there is a relation of dependency between her family and mine. Mboza says: " Should my home be disturbed by quarrels, should my wife Nsabula leave me and run away to her parents, or should she die without children, I shall go and claim my oxen... But the oxen have been employed to buy a wife for my brother-in-law, Maphunga for Mahangale. If Gogwe has no other means at his disposal he must separate the pair Maphunga-Mahangale, cancel their marriage, send Maphunga home and claim the money from her parents. Or I might myself take Maphunga as my wife and in either of these cases the marriage Maphunga-Mahangale will be annulled. "

Let us suppose the case of my wife dying without children. Viguet has told us the first half of the story (page 214); I have paid the *mahloko*; we have finished the mourning; but her parents have no money, no young girl to give us as compensation! What am I to do? Here is the second part of the family drama: the father of the deceased wife having no other ressource " opens the way of bukoñwana to his son-in-law, to the widower ". Let us suppose it is Nsabula who died. Gogwe goes, together with Mboza and his official go-between, to the father of Maphunga. Let us call him Mbekwa. He gives him two hoes and says: " We have brought your mukoñwana (Mboza) because we have had a sad affair (hi humele) ". Mbekwa asks Mboza: " How many hoes did you pay for your deceased wife " ? - " Fifty ", says Mboza. - " Well, we have received from Gogwe only thirty as yet for Maphunga " ! Gogwe acknowledges that it is so.

He must at once find the twenty hoes wanting, gives them back to Mboza, who returns to Mbekwa taking them with him, so as to complete the lobola. All this was only preparatory. Now Gogwe has no further interest in the matter, he returns home. It concerns Mboza alone. Mbekwa calls Maphunga and says : " Look ! this is your great mukonwana ! Now he is your husband". She can say : "Yes, all right ". Then Mboza fetches a goat and a most curious ceremony takes place, which we shall describe later on, the rite of *killing bukoñwana* or *shikoñwana*, the aim being to kill a certain kind of relationship which must be replaced by another. Then Mboza can marry Maphunga. But most probably Maphunga will say : " No! I fear him too much ! It is taboo" ! Her feelings cannot accept such a change in their relations. Viguet does not say : " She loves her own husband too much to go willingly to another " ! This seems to be a minor consideration. If she decidedly refuses, Mbekwa will try to find another woman. Maphunga perhaps has a daughter: she will do. Or Mbekwa has a married son whose daughter can also be offered. If the great mukoñwana is only pregnant, the child to be born is quite enough *ku hingakanya ntjandja*, to put a log across the road and an end to the claim. But the child will perhaps be a boy... not a girl. Never mind ! Mboza will wait patiently for a girl ; Shaputa will be born ; he will wait again until she is of age, then he will marry her and she will *pfnsha yindlu ya rarana*, viz raise up the house of her aunt Nsabula (1). Naturally if matters follow this course, Gogwe will have to pay the lobola of the girl who will have taken the place of the deceased. Nowadays it is not very difficult : he will work or send one of his sons to work, for the money.

So, we plainly see that the great mukoñwana stands in a very peculiar position towards the man by whose oxen she has been bought, and the extreme respect and fear existing between these two persons can partly be thus explained.

There might be another explanation of this mysterious relation

(1) One more fact. If Mahangale has taken another wife besides Maphunga, his daughter born of this second wife could not be used to meet the claim of the widower.

in the following fact : a *great mukoñwana* is also a *mamana*, because her daughters are potential wives for me, being my *balamo*, as we shall see. Perhaps at the very bottom of the Thonga soul there exists the strong feeling that it is altogether bad to marry a woman and her daughter. I fear my mother-in-law because I married her daughter. I fear my great mukoñwana because her daughters are my regular potential wives...

Another mukoñwana is the *wife's father*. Here the respect exists, but there is less fear and very soon a son-in-law calls him tatana, as well as the brothers of the mother-in-law. Of course the term tatana is not used here in its technical sense but only by extension.

We now pass to the *wife's brothers and sisters*. Vulandi, the elder brother of Nsabula, is a *mukoñwana* of Mboza as well as his wife Makhube. Mahangale, the younger brother of Nsabula is also mukoñwana but can be called *namu*. There is a difference between Vulandi and Mahangala on account of their position towards Nsabula, the first being older than she is, the second younger. The *question of age* is very important, especially when dealing with sisters-in-law. *Namu*, plur. *tinamu* in Ronga *balamo* in Djonga, comes from the archaic verb *yalama* which means to *follow*, to come after. My tinamu are those who follow my wife, who have been born after her, her younger sisters particularly. They are my *presumptive wives;* therefore I can play with them with the greatest freedom, I eat together with them of the same plate. They go so far as to smear my face with ashes (tota hi nkuma) and wash it with water afterwards. Nevertheless sexual relations are not allowed. Should a man commit this sin, and should his sister-in-law become pregnant, he will have to pay a fine, or rather he will go to his father-in-law and say : (Viguet) " Ndi dlele ku dya " - " I have killed in order to eat " which means this : I have committed a bad action but with the intention of repairing my wrong by marrying the girl. He brings five hoes when making the notification and will remit the remainder of the lobolo later on. A younger sister when married to the same husband as her elder, is called *nhlantsa* of the latter. This term comes probably from hlantsa, to wash,

because she washes the dishes of her sister and works more or less as her servant.

So Mboza considers Mahazule as his namu. But Shaputa is also an official namu ; the daughter of his wife's brother, whether he is an elder or a younger brother, is a presumptive wife for him as well as his wife's younger sister, and she can *hlantsela rarana*, viz. play the part of a nhlantsa for her maternal aunt Nsabula. These two women are the true tinamu of Mboza. It is easy to understand why Gawana, the wife's elder sister, is not a namu but a *mukoñwana* for him. When Mboza married Nsabula, Gawana had already been taken by Phayindi, according to the law that an elder sister must always marry before her younger ones. A father would not consent to give away the younger before the elder. Therefore Mboza has never had the opportunity of playing with her and considering her as an eventual wife.

On the other hand, if Shapute is a namu and if he can marry her, Mathamba and Mandewen, children of his wife's sisters, are *bana*, daughters, and he would never think of them as wives. The relation seems to be the same, but, on the contrary, for him it is very different. Shaputa being the daughter of Mahangala, son of Gogwe, belongs to the Gogwe family. She bears this family name (shibongo) just the same as Nsabula ; for that reason Mboza can take her. But Mathamba, daughter of Phayindi is not a Gogwe at all. She belongs to the shibongo of Phayindi, and Mboza has no right over her. She calls him father, whilst Shaputa calls him nkata, husband, or namu, though, according to our estimate, both are equally his nieces. We see therefore that a girl can *hlantsela rarana*, viz. become a second wife by the side of her father's sister, but never *hlantsela mamana*, take that place beside her mother's sister.

Let us remind the reader that the husband of the paternal aunt (Muki for Misaben) is also a mukoñwana ; mukoñwana for his nephew and namu for his niece (Madonge) whom he has the right of taking. As an uncle my respect for him was but small ; but if he becomes my true mukoñwana by marrying my sister, the proper mukoñwana relation will set in. I might be

called to interfere in their quarrels ! My sister might take refuge with me if he ill-treats her. I may eventually have to make him pay a fine, as the natural protector of my sister. Therefore my feelings towards him will change !

So far we have considered the relation of Mboza with his wife's family. But what about Nsabula and her position towards her husband's relatives ? Nsabula calls Masuleke and Nsengamunwe *ñwingi*, and the term is reciprocal. It implies a great respect. As we saw, the young bride must work a whole year for her mother-in-law. The same respect is shown by Nsabula to Djan, Sam, Fos, her husband's elder brothers. They are also *ñwingi* to each other. " Should I send her to call Djan, " says Mboza, " she will kneel down before him and say : " My father ! Mboza calls you ! " or : " Nwamasuluke (Masuluke's son), you are wanted with us. " She will not dare to address him by name. This extraordinary respect is reciprocal. Djan will consider Nsabula as his inferior but never play with her. On the other hand, Komatane, Mboza's younger brother is only a *namu* for Nsabula. Both will joke together and even ocasionally smear each other with ashes. So will Sam, Fos, Mboza and Komatane do with Mihlakaza, the wife of their elder brother. Thus we note this law : a woman will generally respect the elder brothers of her husband (bengi), and hold very free intercourse with his younger brothers (tinamu), and vice-versa. A man will keep away from his younger brother's wives (bengi) and play with those of his elder brothers (tinamu). Why this difference ? Because the wife of an elder brother is an eventual wife for all his younger brothers, as they are those who have the right of inheriting her, should that man die. On the contrary, an elder brother inherits his younger brother's wife only under quite exceptional circumstances. One does not marry a ñwingi ! This would be an insult to one's wife. Nsabula would leave Mboza if Mboza were taking Magugu, Komatane's wife, because they have been accustomed to call each other ñwingi.

For a wife, her husband's elder sister is also a ñwingi (Ndjibari for Nsabula). The husband's younger sister is a namu or

nhombe, and two tinhombe have very free relations, just the same as the tinamu. This freedom exists between female tinamu as well as between tinamu of different sexes.

* * *

The study of these terms of relationships and of moral relations, subsisting between the members of two allied families, shows us that the bukoñwana is dominated by a striking contrast : on the one hand a wonderful fear or respect for some of my relatives-in-law (shitshabu means both), and on the other hand an extreme freedom with others. To show to what extent this fear is carried, I will briefly mention *the special taboos of the bukoñwana*, which are so characteristic of Bantu family life. They will perhaps help us to understand the reason of some of these strange features.

We have already seen that, during the betrothal visit, the bridegroom must take care to avoid certain acts which are taboo (yila). Later on, during the gatherings taking place *before* marriage, some other taboos are imposed :

1. In the discussion about the lobola, when oxen are counted, the bridegroom's parents must never offer eight head of cattle, because one of them will be killed for the feast and so eight means only seven. *Seven* is counted in lifting, one after the other the five fingers of the left hand and the thumb and index of the right one. Lifting up the index, they might point with it at the bakoñwana, and this would be a mortal offence. To point at anyone with the index is as bad as to bewitch him. It is done only in anger and all the preceding discussions might be nullified if such an imprudence were committed.

2. Should one of the oxen be frightened at the shouts of joy greeting the arrival of the herd and the sham-fight of the lobola day, and should it run away home, it is taboo. The ox has seen that something was wrong and has consequently fled. Even should one succeed in bringing it back, " timpfalo ti tjukile", the conscience (or the diaphragm) has been stirred !

3. If one of the oxen has no horns (homu ya mhulu), or only abortive horns, psa yila : *bukoñwana byi ta pfumala tintsalu*, viz., the relations with relatives-in-law will have no tenderness. Because such an ox moves the head to and fro as it wanders in the night ; it is abnormal. The bride's family will not accept it.

4. Should the lobola consist of hoes, and should the rain fall on them while being carried to the bakoñwana, it is taboo. The lobolo must not be brought in a wet condition, otherwise the new relations will be spoilt (bukoñwana byi ta tshipa), these young people will not be able to marry.

5. Do not bring with you tobacco in the leaf when going *bukwen* as a fiancé, bring only, ground tobacco or misfortune will happen. Later on, when you have taken your wife, it is allowable.

6. Never eat zebra or reedbuck's meat when staying with your parents-in-law. Should they kill one of these animals while you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. Zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal with two colours; moreover it has no horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours, it has too long bowels. Psa yila ! Reedbuck cries : " Dzoo ". It is a witch : a mukoñwana must not eat it. For that same reason a sheep, having no horns, is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When going with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shirwalo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall on the ground, psa yila ! Return home !

8. Do not build the hut for your wife before having married her. Hear Mankhelu : " Even if you have plenty of money to lobola, if you make such a blunder, your wife will be taken from you... In the same manner, do not prepare the skin for the child before it is born. Your wife would not bring forth a human being. Should you transgress this rule, you would bring misfortune on yourself (wa tihlolela, wa singita), and on your family. If you go to Moneri (the missionary) and ask him for a skin for the purpose before the birth of your child, he will tell you it is so ". Note the deep-rooted conviction

of the old heathen who appeals to the authority of the missionary to strengthen the taboo !

9. Later on, when you are married, you must avoid eating honey with your wife for a whole year, till she has had a child. The bride is allowed to eat honey at her parent's home but not in her new domicile and with her husband. The husband can eat it in the bush, but he must wash his hands coming back, lest his wife notices it. She would run home if she knew it. We have already met with that prohibition in the tjekela visit, and heard the reason for it : honey flows ; the bride would go ! The explanation given now is this : honey is too sweet and your bride is too sweet also. (Is it not your honey moon or honey year ?) Both things do not go together. (Psa yalana, they hate each other). A third reason is this : Bees, when they have eaten their honey, fly away from the hive. So would your wife do... After a year this misfortune is no longer to be feared.

This last idea is very curious. It shows that the bukoñwana taboos *decrease in severity as the time passes*. The strained relations between son-in-law and his wife's mother also become easier. He begins to call her mamana and she calls him ñwana. This transformation even goes so far that in some cases a mukoñwana can go and dwell in his parents-in-law's village, especially if he has children and if the children are grown up. And this fact affords the natural explanation of these curious rules:

Marriage, as we have seen, is not an individual affair, in the collective stage of family life. It is a contract passed between two groups which enter by it into a special relation towards each other. This relation is fraught with dangers, because the interests of both groups are involved; a bride and bridegroom are inspired with a mutual feeling of fear, knowing that an eventual misunderstanding between them will have its "contre coup" all through the two groups. Both families regard each other with mistrust, especially the two married couples who depend so closely upon each other, owing to the lobola; but when they have become acquainted, when they are assured that common life is possible and even agreeable, when a first

alliance has been strenghtened by others amongst the tinamu, then the bukonwana taboos more or less fall off. This is an explanation of these strange relations between relatives-in-law; I do not pretend that it is an absolutely sufficient one. There may be also in this domain some remants of previous customs which have now disappeared, and Comparative Ethnography will probably throw more light on this problem in course of time.

C. MARRIAGE RULES

The study of the terms of relationship has shown us the constitution of the Thonga family. We shall get some important sidelights on this mysterious subject when considering the rules regulating marriage in our tribe. Generally speaking it may be said that the Thonga are *endogamic* as regards the tribe and the clan, and *exogamic* as regards the family. They are *endogamic*, as regards the tribe, that is to say they marry within it. Members of clans very remote from each other may find it difficult to contract unions, (see later on), but they do it, however, especially in Spelonken, where representatives of many different parts of the tribe have met by force of historical circumstances. In the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, you may find Thonga women married to men of other tribes and even to White people. But this is the result of a new state of things which the old Thonga did not foresee; nor would they have approved of it, I am sure. In Shiluvane, I have been in a very favourable position to judge of the real feelings of the Thonga. There were two tribes there, living side by side for more than seventy years, tribes united by an old friendship and military alliance, viz., the Nkuna clan of the Thonga and the Khaha clan of the Pedi. I did not see a single case of intermarriage between them. The difference of language could not account for the fact, because all the men generally could speak both Thonga and Pedi. When asked why they did not contract unions with the Pedi, the Nkuna answered: " Their customs are too disgust-

ing for us". They meant more especially, the freedom with which Khaha women commit adultery. Pedi would probably have made the same objection to the immorality of Thonga boys and girls. Whatever may be the cause, they have not intermarried up to this day.

On the other hand the Thonga are *exogamic* as regards the family. To understand properly these exogamic rules, let us classify the cases into the four following categories :

Cases of absolute prohibition of marriage ; of conditional permission ; of unconditional permission, and cases in which marriage is recommended.

1. *Cases of absolute prohibition.*

As a rule marriage is prohibited between a tatana, mamana, rarana and a ñwana, and between bamakwabu.

On the father's side the prohibition is particularly severe. Amongst the Ba-Ronga, it is taboo for a boy to marry a girl when both can lay claim to a common ancestor in the paternal line. It seems that the rule is not so stringent in the Northern clans. According to Mankhelu, marriage is absolutely prohibited between all the descendants of a grandfather, viz., between first cousins. Between second cousins it is permitted conditionally, " by killing the family tie ", and between third cousins it is allowed. " Third cousins " as Mankhelu says, " are *batlandlamani ba tolo ;* they belong to families which were relatives yesterday. We are no longer taboo for them, we can go and take a wife amongst them ".

On the mother's side, this absolute prohibition extends to first cousins when mothers are sisters. They are true bamakwabu; they have been nursed at the same breast. But more remote cousins marry more easily when their relationship is on the mother's side. The bakokwana do not marry their batukulu, owing to their duty of sacrificing for them, but the batukulu have a kind of preferential right to women related to their

mother: "Where father has married, I may go also to find my wife", said Gana. However the rule remains that bamakwabn must not intermarry.

When asked: "Why", the Thonga generally say: "Because it is so. Psa yila. It is our law". It is however possible to find some more satisfactory reasons: these prohibitions are certainly dictated *by fear of consanguinity*. Natives have probably noticed that the offspring of such unions are sometimes weak in intellect or altogether wanting. Therefore, in this polygamic family system, they make a careful distinction between relatives who are of the same mother and of the same father, and those whose mothers are different. When a cousin is of another grandmother, though she is called makwabu by me just as my true sister or first cousin, I can think of marrying her. She is my half first cousin only. However the fear of consaguinity is not the only nor perhaps the strongest, reason for these exogamic rules. If it were so, why would relatives on the father's side be more taboo than those on the mother's side? Moreover it is strange to see that in the royal families the same prohibitions are not maintained. Nwamantibiyana, chief of Mpfumo, married Mimalengane, his rarana, his first cousin once removed on the father's side. If one only had in view the physical dangers arising from consanguine unions, such marriages ought to be doubly feared in the royal family!

I find two other reasons:

In the Thonga mind there is *a natural repulsion to confound and intermingle bushaka and bukoñwana*, relationship by blood and by marriage. Bushaka is a kind of relation which they do not deem compatible with bukoñwana, as we shall presently see. To the Northern clans this is not so repugnant: with them, it is a current saying that bukoñwana revives bushaka when bushaka becomes weaker in the course of generations.

A third reason for these strong taboos, a reason which explains also why prohibition is stronger on the father's than on the mother's side, is found in *the lobola custom*. Should a woman who is a relative on my father's side become my wife and should our union be broken by quarrels, I should go to her father to

claim the lobolo. If her father happens to possess no oxen to return to me, he will have to go to his relatives to get them... He may have to come to my own father who is his brother and belongs to the same family, a consequence which would be indeed absurd, because then I should myself pay the debt due to me!

On his wife's side, a man cannot marry the elder sister of his wife who is mukoñwana for him, nor the daughters of his wife's sisters who are *bana* for him, as we have seen.

II. *Marriages conditionally permitted.*

In some cases a marriage which ought not to take place, can be allowed on the condition that the whole family will perform the rite called *dlaya shilongo*. This is a most curious custom and is spread all through the tribe. I know of two cases in which it has been resorted to: a certain Mkili, of the Makaneta sub-clan (Nondwane) wanted to marry Minsabula, his makwabu. Both had a common ancestor Muwayi. Muwayi had by a first wife a son called Basana and by a second wife another son called Nsabula. Basana was the father of Mungobo, father of Mkili, and Nsabula was the father of Minsabula. Mungobo and Nsabula were first cousins or half first cousins (as their grandmothers, wives of Muwayi, were different). Therefore Mkili was first cousin once removed of Minsabula. Both were ba ka Makaneta. Another case was that of Michel, son of Gana and Nwashiluvane, who married Djamela, daughter of Mankhelu who was Nwashiluvane's brother. Mankhelu was the malume of Michel and Djamela was his mamana, being the eventual wife of Gana (See page 243). For a Thonga, to marry her malume's daughter, *psa yila,* whilst for a Pedi it is the proper thing. This is one of the great differences between the law of the two tribes. A Pedi has a real right of pre-emption on his *mudzwala*, whilst amongst the Thonga it is the father who possesses that right. Possibly this Pedi custom encouraged Michel to entertain an

idea which is repulsive to the Thonga mind. But the official *dlaya shilongo* took place in his case also.

I have tried to discover in what other cases such a prohibited marriage was made possible by the performance of the rite, and I found these :

Conditional marriage is permissible with the daughter of my great-uncle, younger brother of my grandfather; with the daughter of my grandfather by a wife other than my grandmother. Both are rarana. According to Mankhelu, it can take place also between himself and Shiluvane. This Shiluvane (who is not the chief Shiluvane, of course, but quite another person), is the daughter of the maternal great-uncle of Mankhelu, brother of Shidyele, who is his true grandfather, the father of his mother. Shiluvane is therefore the first cousin once removed of Mankhelu on his mother's side. She is a mamana.

But what is this rite of *dlaya shilongo* which has such power that it removes the taboo character from such marriages? *Shilongo or mulongo* is an archaic word retained only in this expression and which corresponds to bushaka, blood relationship. This root exists also with that sense in the Suto word *seloko*. The relation by blood must be killed to give way to the relation by marriage.

Let us first see how it is done *in the Northern clans*.

A young man who has the courage to think of marrying a near relation is a wizard. *A lowa*, he bewitches! This term, which is applied only to proper witches, is not too strong to designate his action! He was not allowed to *gangisa* her and now he will take her as a wife! But this word lowa, or loya, is still used here in another way: "Bushaka byi lowa hi tihomu" (the blood relationship is bewitched by the oxen). "Bumamana byi lowa" (the mother relationship is bewitched). (Viguet). Those who consent to such an act must be prayed for publicly and anointed with psanyi of a sacrificed goat!

So the young man goes to his uncle, the father of the girl, to announce his intention of marrying her; he must *be homu*, beat an ox, viz. bring an ox with him as a first means of

appeasing his uncle. This ox is said to "open the hut". The ox may be only a goat, the goat which will be used for the sacrifice, — because a religious ceremony is necessary. All the relatives assemble on a certain day in the girl's village. The wedding pair are inside the hut, the goat is killed, the offering prepared, the psanyi put aside. Then the bridegroom and the bride are called outside and made to sit on the same mat; the man's leg is passed over the girl's leg; (this is done to "kill the shame" (ku dlaya tingana); they are both anointed with the green liquid of the psanyi; the skin of the goat is then taken, a hole cut in its middle and it is put on the head of the two cousins. Through the opening, the liver of the animal is handed down to them, quite raw. They must tear it out with their teeth. It must not be cut with a knife; this is taboo. They have to bite it, to pull vigourously on both sides so as to really tear it out and then they must eat it. Shibindji, liver, means also patience, determination. "You, have acted with strong determination! Eat the liver now! Eat it in the full light of the day, not in the dark! It will be a mhamba, an offering to the gods (Gana)". The priest of the family will then say: "You, our gods, so and so, look! We have done it in the daylight. It has not been done by stealth. Bless them, give them children." Should this sacrifice not be made, misfortune would indeed be them and this woman would remain childless. When the prayer is finished, the assistants take all the solid psanyi, put it on the wife's head and say to her: "Go and bear children".

In the Ronga clans the *dlaya shilongo* is somewhat different. The bridegroom must first give £ 1 to the father; this is over and above the lobolo, of course. Both families provide a goat. They are killed without the assistance of the uterine nephews, in front of the hut of the girl's mother. The grandfather prays to the gods of the girl's father: "All right! They have decided to marry each other; you, gods of the boy and the girl, unite them together so that they do not hate each other; let them not remind each other that they are brother and sister; let their union not be spoilt by such remembrances, nor

when other people will say to them : " You have bewitched ! You have married your relative ! " By this prayer, a general notification is given to everybody, and the feeling of shame has been removed. Afterwards the officiating relative goes on, exhorting the new wife, telling her all that she must do for her husband, mentioning all the details of the conjugal duties with such a realism that she begins to cry. The bridegroom bows his head in shame. The preacher goes on till somebody puts a piece of meat in his mouth to stop the exhortation !

The whole country has gathered to see the proceedings and to eat the meat. The wedding pair do not partake of it, because *the goats have been sacrificed for them* (ba hahlela bone). The relatives go home and roast on the road the joint of meat they have received so as to eat it before reaching their village.

The aim of the *dlaya shibongo* is to lawfully kill one kind of relationship and to replace it by another, because the two are not compatible. However, in a case of inheritance of a rarana, for instance, when a blood relative has to change his relationship and to become a relative by marriage, he can inherit without any rite being performed, if there is no nearer legal heir ; in this case it is said : " Bushaka byi ta pfuka " — " the blood relationship will be revived ". It will be strengthened by the new marriage relationship.

In the case of marriage with the great mukoñwana, this rite is also performed, as previously mentioned. The wedding pair are also covered with the goat's skin. This goat is called *the cat*, because it is like a cat which is put on their shoulders and scratches them. It scratches away the bukoñwana which was preventing their marriage. (Viguet). In this case it is the *shikoñwana* which is killed. So the taboo is removed and they can marry.

III. *Marriages permitted.*

Relatives from the eighth degree of relationship can marry unconditionally (Mankhelu). The choice of a boy is unlimited within the clan and even within the tribe. However, marriages

into a *too far distant clan* are not recommended, according to Viguet, for the following reasons : 1) If the marriage becomes spoilt, parents-in-law against whom the claim is brought might run away with wife and oxen, and we should lose our herd. 2) If our oxen multiply in the other clan, we might be tempted to go and make war with our parents-in-law to appropriate the cattle. So blood would be shed on account of our own oxen ! This would be a shame for us ! Whilst if we marry amongst friends, even amongst remote relatives, should a quarrel occur, we should try to settle it peacefully. The people are amongst those with whom we discuss in the hut. With strangers we discuss outside, on the square, and we occasionally fight with them and drive them away. So a difficulty can better be dealt with when our bukoñwana are people living close by.

IV. *Marriages recommended.*

Here we must take into account two different cases : some marriages are contracted on account of a kind of right of pre-emption, others on account of a right of inheritance.

1) Right of pre-emption

There are amongst the relatives of a man certain women on whom he has a kind of proferential claim, or a right of pre-emption, and whom he calls spouses, because he would be welcomed if he were able to lobola them. They are his proper *tinamu*, viz., his wife's younger sisters or the daughters of his wife's brother. These marriages are considered as peculiarly appropriate. However this is not an absolute right for the man. Should he not prove a good husband, his parents-in-law will not let him have their other daughters.

Other women to whom a man has a special right of pretending are his relatives on the mother's side, as we saw : to

take a wife from the family in which the father found the mother is recommended, and approved, as long as she is not a too near relative. However there is a reason which militates against such marriages If I quarrel with my first wife, who might be a particularly troublesome character, and she goes home, her younger sisters or nieces, who are her tinhlantsa, will certainly follow her, and I should remain quite alone without a single dish to eat in the evening. Should the quarrel end in a divorce, I should lose all my wives at once. The custom of marrying wife's tinhlantsa is approved of; however it is not very frequently followed in Thonga families.

2) The right of inheritance

The second class of cases does not concern unmarried women whom I mean to lobola, but widows whom I might inherit after the death of their husband. Those whom I can eventual inherit are generally called by me *namu* or *nsati*, and I have very free relations with them, but this liberty never goes so far as to allow sexual intercourse. "Ndi nga da", viz. "I can eat, inherit by prior right" *my elder brother's widow:* she is my regular legacy. As regards my young brother's widow, I can only marry her if she is old, no longer able to bear children. But to take her, if she is still a childbearing woman, is very much against the feelings of the tribe. The reason of the prohibition is this, says Viguet: suppose that this widow of my younger brother already had children. I take her, I have a child by her. The child takes precedence of the first children of its mother: he is their *hosi*, because I, myself, the father, am the elder brother of the deceased. On the other hand, he is *ndjisana* of his other brothers, because he was born after them from the same mother: this is impossible; it destroys the most elementary family notions. In exceptional cases, however, when no one else can claim my younger brother's widow, I may take her.

Next to my true tinamu comes *the widow of my maternal*

uncle. If he had many, one might be alloted to me in repartition. But of course, in this as in all the other cases of inherited women, the children which might be born of our union will belong to the family who paid the lobolo, and not to me. I have, in one sense, only the usufruct of the property. She will till the fields for me and serve me with my daily plate of porridge, but she is not really mine. She is given (nyika) to me by favour, and only under specified conditions. I can also inherit *bakokwana*, the widow of my malume's father (not my true grandmother of course, but her co-wife), the widow of my father's brothers.

Muhambi can inherit Magugu *the widow of his cousin* Hlangabeza. This cousin is a brother (makwabu) and the two fathers are brothers. But he could not inherit Debeza, wife of Phusa. Why? Because Phusa, being a cousin by the father's sister, belongs to another *shibongo*, the shibongo of his own father Muki and not of his mother. Should Muhambi lay claim to take Debeza, the men of Mashabane (name of Phusa's clan) would say: "We are opposed to it, because, doing so would in a fact mean that you *eat two herds*. You have eaten one herd when we have lobola Ndjibari! Ndjibari has had two children: we have sold her daughter Nwashidjasa to lobola a wife for Phusa. The oxen were ours. If Phusa dies, his wife belongs to us and not to you". So Muhambi can inherit the widow of his cousin, son of his paternal uncle, but not the widow of his cousin, son of his paternal aunt.

A man can inherit also *one of his father's wives*, as we saw (page 200), but only under certain circumstances. The dlaya shilongo is never performed in case of inherited women.

A rule on which Viguet insisted, but which is disappearing is this: women, when their husband had no younger brothers, must be inherited by *batukulu* and not by *bana*: batukulu, either true grandsons, sons of the son, or uterine nephews, sons of the sister of the deceased. The reasons for this law are: 1) Bana, sons, would take liberties with their father's wives and make balamo of them, if they could regularly inherit them. This would spoil the village life. 2) If I, being ñwana, son, inherit my father's wife and have a child by her, this child is ñwana,

son, for me. On the other hand, this inherited woman might have had children by my father, and they are my brothers. So, amongst this woman's children, one is my son, the other my brother! "A beleki tinshaka timbiri". — "She has had children of two generations!" That won't do!

These marriage regulations show us plainly how the family is constitued amongst the Thonga. A glimpse at the system of relationship of the primitive tribes will help us to understand something more of the strange features of this familial law.

D. REMNANTS OF PREVIOUS SYSTEMS OF RELATIONSHIP

Modern ethnographers have tried to make out how the human family has evolved through the ages and this is roughly, the theory adopted by some of them: the first stage has been marked by universal promiscuity. There was no family at first. Then, in a second period, restriction began to be enforced as regards marriage. Definite groups formed; all the women of one group were the regular wives of all the men of another group. This system still prevails in some Australian tribes. It is called *group marriage*. In a third phase, the family constituted itself round the mother. She was the owner of the children, who traced their descent through her and her female ancestors. In this form, which is called the *uterine family*, or matriarchy, the mother's brothers bore a special relation to the children: the father being hardly known or without authority, these male relatives of the mother had to defend the offspring of their sisters. In the end, the uterine family passed into the *patriarchal or agnatic family*. The father became the head and descent was traced through the males. The development of property seems to have favoured this last evolution. The husband, who owned the property, became the master of the family and he therefore took his wife to himself and made a home.

Whatever may be the truth of this theory, we must recognise

the fact that the Thonga have now reached this fourth stage. The family is decidedly agnatic. Father's right is paramount. However, there are in this familial system some features which appear to be a relic of former periods.

I. *Original promiscuity.*

As regards the idea that promiscuity prevailed originally — a supposition which is combated by some scientists (see W. H. R. Rivers, "On the origin of the classificatory system of relationship," Anthropological Essays), I see no trace of it amongst the Thonga. Amongst the Pedi, there is one day when free intercourse is allowed all through the clans; it is the closing day of the second circumcision school. But this custom can be explained in a totally different way.

II. *Group marriage.*

As regards *group marriage*, we may see a remnant of the system in the fact that a man has a special preferential right to certain women of his wife's family, the tinamu. His son will also consider it peculiarly appropriate to take a wife from his mother's clan, the one into which his father married.

The tinamu custom might be explained in that way. However there is a very marked difference between the group-marriage system and the Thonga familial law. Amongst Australian aborigenes, if a man of a group has the right of marrying all the women of the other group, a woman of the other group has the same right to marry all the men of the first one. Amongst the Thonga it is absolutely taboo for a married woman to have relations with anybody except her own husband. Polygamy exists and is approved, but polyandry is strongly censured and considered a disgusting custom. The main reason

for this is no doubt the *matlulana* superstition, which bears all the character of an old, old idea in the Thonga system of customs. The story of P. K. which I relate in Appendix IV, will show how deeply the sin of polyandry is felt. (1)

Though laying much stress on this very important difference we must notice, however, that there is a certain correspondence between the rights of men and women in this respect. A man has a preferential right to his wife's younger sisters, and to the daughters of his wife's brothers, be these men younger or older than his wife He is a potential husband for all these tinamu. It results from this fact, that, as regards a woman, she is also a potential wife for all her husband's younger brothers. who can inherit her and are also called tinamu by her, and for the sons of her husband's sisters, be they older or younger than her husband.

Another feature of these early Australian forms of society is that all the persons belonging to a given generation call each other brothers (or sisters), call the preceding generation fathers and mothers and the following one sons indiscriminately. We might compare with this classificatory system the Thonga custom of calling mothers all the father's wives, all the mother's sisters, and fathers all the father's brothers. But this is not necessarily a trace of group marriage. As we have seen before, the meaning of kinship terms is very often extended to other people as a sign of respect or of love; the Thonga, nevertheless, know perfectly well the difference existing between the technical use of these terms and their wider connotation. There is something natural in these appellations. When we call such and such an ecclesiastic Father Norton, Mother Fuller, Brother James or Sister Agnes, no one would take this to be a relic of the group marriage phase! On this point my conclusion is therefore : certain customs can be considered as traces of this old system, but it is

(1) It is true that Ba-Pedi who are neighbours of the Thonga, have a kind of polyandry (See page 99). But this has nothing to do with group marriage, and the wives of a rich man whom he allows to have intercourse with other men, choose their lovers as they like and not according to a law of preferential right binding two groups.

not absolutely necessary to explain them by this hypothesis. The preference accorded to a wife's sisters, or nieces, might very well owe its origin to the following cause : when a group has ascertained that its women are well treated in another group, it welcomes new alliances with that group, thinking that, in this dreadful lottery of marriage, one must not despise the guarantee given by a previous happy union !

III. *Matriarchy.*

But as regards *mother-right* and the *uterine family*, I must confess that I have changed my mind since writing Les Ba-Ronga, and would testify my gratitude to Mr. S. Hartland, who encouraged me to study this subject more attentively. I had not then gathered all the facts, and the identity of the *ntukulu* and the *mupsyana* only became clearly apparent to me when studying the Northern clans. Now, having inquired with special care into this most curious feature of the Thonga system, I come to the conclusion that the only possible explanation is that, in former and very remote times, our tribe has passed through the matriarchal stage. Let us carefully consider the relation of a malume with his uterine nephews, recapitulating all the facts.

1) Duties and rights of the maternal uncle

As we have seen, the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle : if he is a first born child, the malume prepares his ntehe. (See page 44). When weaned, he goes to stay in the village of his mother's relatives for many years, a girl sometimes till she is grown up. Later on, when she marries, the maternal uncle claims a right called *tjhumba*, £ 1. on the total amount of the lobolo. It is taboo to refuse it; should a father dare to keep that £ 1, his brothers will say to him : " Do you not fear the gods ? The

mother's gods will kill you! Your daughter will have no children. Have you alone brought her into the world? Did these people not help you in bringing her forth? And has your wife not grown by the assistance of those gods. Her brother must be allowed to have his *tjhumba*" (Mboza).

On the day of the remittance of the lobolo, the maternal uncle and all the mother's relatives are invited to the feast, and for them a special part of the festal ox is reserved, called *nyimba*, viz. the womb, the uterus; it does not consist only of this organ, but of all the belly, from, the sternum to the hind legs; the bride's mother eats the *mbata* and *khondjo*, viz. the extremity of the spine (Mboza).

On the day of hlomisa, when the bride is led to her husband's village, her maternal relatives receive a special gift, a young cow called *mubya wa mana wa yena*, the skin in which her mother carried her on her shoulders when she was a baby. This cow will be sent to the family when the first and the third daughter marry. In the case of a second, and a fourth girl, the nyimba alone is sent.

In the *equipment of the bride*, the mother's relatives provide her hoe, fat to anoint her body, her mat and clothing and sometimes bracelets. The paternal aunt (hahana) does not give anything, neither does the paternal uncle, the latter only helping the father occasionally. Should the mother's relatives not fulfil this duty of providing part of the trousseau, next time they will not be given the *nyimba* to which they were entitled (Viguet).

But the most characteristic prerogative of the bamalume or bakokwana, is *their special right of intercession* on behalf of the uterine nephews. In fact, as Mankhelu said in his so picturesque language, "as regards sacrifices (timhamba), the mother's relatives mostly perform them. They are the stem. My father is the stem on account of the oxen. My mother is the true stem; she is the god; she makes me grow. Should she die when I am an infant, I will not live. At the village of my mother it is at the god's (ka mamana hi ko psikwembyen)". Simeon Gana added: "We have the special charge of sacrificing

for our batukulu; our sons also are priests for them, and can officiate in our place, even should they be younger than our batukulu. This is the reason why we do not marry them. We are their elders (bakulu)." The bones will always tell if a sacrifice must be offered to the gods of the mother or to those of the father, but a kokwane will preferably be called upon to sacrifice for a sick child.

In the ceremonies following death, especially in the feast of the mourning beer (page 164), the malume will be the officiating person and squeeze the *psanyi* over his batukulu to cleanse them.

A last right possessed by the malume is *to raise his village (pfusha muti) by means of a ntukulu*. Should he see that he has no children, that his village is in danger of "dying", he will take his unmarried sister to his village and refuse to accept the lobolo for her. He will say to her: "Do not fear! If you die, I will bury you!" This duty belongs before all to the husband; but the brother is ready to fulfil it. She will have lovers, and perhaps give birth to a son. As she has not been lobola, this child belongs to the mother's family, according to the great rule of native law. The uncle will appropriate this male offspring of his family, who will bear the *shibongo* of his kokwana. An uterine nephew, adopted under these circumstances, can save the family of his mother from disappearing.

2) Rights of the uterine nephew.

The attitude of the ntukulu wa shisati (the uterine nephew) to his malume is quite peculiar. "Ntukulu i hosi, a nyenyela hikwapsu ku malume" — "The uterine nephew is a chief! He takes any liberty he likes with his maternal uncle" (Mboza). It seems as if this behaviour were a relic of a primitive state, where the strong hand of a father was not yet felt and family relations were more free than now. These prerogatives of uterine nephews regarding relatives on their mother's side, their bamalume and bakokwana, appear even more clearly in

the religious ceremonies. We have seen the prominent part which batukulu take in these rites. "Ba yima mahlwen ka psikwembu" — "they are standing before the gods, in their stead" (Viguet). They must be the servants of the altar, and the consumers of the offering. In the great sacrifice for rain, as accomplished in the Northern clans, an offering of beer is made together with the sacrifice of the black victim. (See Part VI). It is the uterine niece of the chief who must fetch the mealies from the granary, pour them into the pot, take the first handful to crush it in the mortar, give the first blow with the pestle, and inaugurate everyone of the complicated acts of the brewing. When the black victim is brought, some one puts an assagay in her hand and helps her to stab the animal. She is the one who "gives over to the gods" (nyiketa psikwembo). The same thing happens in the great family gatherings : one ntukulu holds the leg, another the assagay. The batukulu dispose of the portion of the limbs offered to the gods. They *cut* the prayer and, at that moment they steal the meat or the beer of the sacrifice and run away with them. Why? "Because a ntukulu does not fear the saliva of his malume" (Mboza). They are living in such intimacy with them that they can eat that which was reserved for the gods(1) (See p. 162).

The ntukulu *also takes precedence* in some other rites; in the circumcision school the uterine nephew of the chief is at the head of the circumcised. In the *luma milomo* (page 146) he starts the purifying ceremony, and "gives to the others" (nyiketa) the use of the food of the deceased.

But it is essentially in the question of the inheritance that he

(1) Some ethnographers have supposed that ancestral worship only began when the father took the family in hand and consequently did not exist in the period of mother-right. This seems to me absolutely false. The spirits of the mother's family are invoked as well as the father's ancestors, and the special place of the uterine nephews in worship up to this day can only be explained in this way : before the gods of the father were known and prayed to, those of the mother were worshipped, and consequently the batukulu held a special position in the ritual. When the ancestors on the father's side made their appearance in the Bantu Pantheon, beside those on the mother's side, or after the institution of father's right, the batukulu preserved that special position which no one can now explain.

shows himself under the characteristic aspect. Father-right has set in and is strongly supported by the lobola custom. Therefore sons of the deceased have the sole right to the property of their father, wives as well as implements. However, the batukulu, the uterine nephews cannot keep quiet! You will find them everywhere, trying to get something. They were already planning with the malume's wives to take them as spouses after the death of her husband. Look how they teased the whole family, on the day of the repartition of the widows (page 206). When the implements were distributed, they came and claimed their *tjhumba* (a technical expression, it seems, which means precisely this kind of claim lodged by a malume or a ntukulu). They were given the small assagay, the big one remaining for the son. In this way *ba nyiketa pfindla, they give over the inheritance to the legal heirs*. This is a most vivid representation of a right which no longer exists, having in fact become obsolete, but which asserts itself however in virtue of the survival of an old custom. I have often been struck by the unconscious way in which they act on all these occasions! They give the impression of people who have been hypnotised and ordered to do something next day, when no longer in the mesmeric sleep. You see them accomplishing the act, constrained by a mysterious necessity and without knowing why. The hypnotising factor here is this powerful heredity, the weight of all this hoary past, which is past indeed but still influences the subliminal life of the tribe...

As regards the chiefs, I may add that the uterine nephew can be given the chieftainship over a certain part of the country. He is well received at the Court, better than the nephew on the brother's side, because, with these, there is always the danger that they may become usurpers.

Mother-right has most probably existed amongst the ancestors of the Thonga, whatever may be the country where they then lived, and the name by which they were called. But everything seems to prove that this phase has long ago passed away. No one remembers anything of the kind. Genealogies, which are the oldest records of the tribe, mention only the ancestors of the

father. They are recalled much better than those of the mother. The lobola custom, which is the strongest upholder of the paternal right at present, has been practised since time immemorial.(1) See also the special names of the great grandfathers in the paternal line (p. 222).

I have tried to look far away into the past of the Thonga familial system. Now I ask: What about its future? The question must be asked, because we do not consider the South African tribe only as a subject of scientific study. We are deeply interested in its welfare and in its destiny. New forces have appeared which act in a new way on the primitive society.

What will be, what must be the turn of the evolution? How must it be directed by those who have a responsibility in the shaping of the future Bantu society?

We shall answer this question in considering more closely the two great customs which lie at the base of the whole present family system of the Thonga: Lobola and Polygamy.

E. THE LOBOLA CUSTOM

I. *The History of the Custom. How it is practised.*

As far back as natives can remember, lobola has always been practised. First it consisted in *mats* and *baskets*, in those remote

(1) Lobola is however not incompatible with the uterine form of the family. I have been informed by the Rev. Allégret, working in the French Congo, that the Mpongwe and Galoa of the Lower Ogowe have still partly preserved the mother-right. But lobola exists. The first lobolo is payed indifferently to the father or the mother of the bride, and the choice is made according to the personal relations existing between the husband's family and the families of the bride's parents. When a second daughter marries, half the lobolo is given to the maternal uncle. The children stay in the father's village, but they are under the guidance of the mother and of her family. They belong to the mother's clan. This system denotes evidently a less advanced stage in the evolution. However matriarchy is passing into patriarchy, and the lobola custom will probably hasten the process.

times when White people had not yet made their appearance. The *large iron rings* were procured by barter from sailors who anchored off the shore (see Part IV), and were employed for the purpose. Later on White traders settled in the country. *Beads* were bought from them (nkarara), especially large ones (mubatlwana). A chief used to lobola with ten handfuls of them, a subject with only five. Large *brass rings* were also used in old times. Two of them have been found lately in the Mapute country, and one came into my possession. It weighs more than two pounds. They were called *litlatla* and were very much sought after. One was enough to buy a wife.

Oxen have also been used for a very long time for lobola. Some say that they were the regular means of getting a wife in the 18th century. When Manukosi came, in 1820 he appropriated all the cattle, and the Thonga were obliged to use beads and hoes for that reason. At any rate the Nkuna when they emigrated into the Transvaal in 1835, were paying lobolo in oxen. A father claimed ten for his daughter. The Pedi of the country claimed only two or three, and this was one of the reasons why the two tribes did not intermarry. Strange to say, I never heard goats mentioned as having served for this purpose, though the goat is certainly the oldest domestic animal of the South African Bantu! Whatever may have been the objects at first used, sooner or later oxen, live stock, became the true means of lobola. This appears plainly in the technical expressions: to go out with a herd (ntlhambi), viz., to go to lobola, — to eat the oxen, viz., to accept a lobolo, — the woman of my oxen, viz., the one bought with the oxen given by me for my wife, etc.

The scarcity of the oxen, probably caused by the wars with the Zulu, was no doubt the reason why they were replaced by hoes. *Hoes* were universally employed from 1840–1870, together with oxen, when available. Ten as the regular price for lobola. Later on fathers asked twenty, thirty, fifty. They were first of native make; the Bvesha of Speonken, near the Iron Mountain, provided the whole tribe for a time with that heavy currency, until the Europeans saw that there was a good

business to be done in supplying them. See (Part IV). Portuguese traders of Delagoa Bay began to send natives to Gaza

A « NTLHAMBI »
Cattle going to water at the Maputju river.
Phot. D. Lewoir

with guns and powder to hunt elephants, and paid them in hoes: twenty, fifty, one hundred hoes for a tusk, according to its size.

But hoes have also been superseded by the universal power

of the *pound sterling*. After the death of Manukosi (1858), early in the sixties of the past century, some Zulus came to Delagoa Bay from Natal, sent by Englishmen to hunt elephants in Gaza. They told the people of the country that money could be obtained in Pietermaritzburg (Umgundhlovo) by working, and the first Ba-Ronga went *ku berengen*, viz., to serve White people there. In 1870, in the year still called Daiman by the chroniclers of the tribe, many more went to Kimberley, especially from the Transvaal colonies of Thonga, and the gold coin began to spread amongst the tribe with all its usefulness and all its dangers. It is now becoming more and more current, as 50.000 to 70.000 natives of the Thonga tribe are working in the Johannesburg mines. First of all £ 1 was worth ten hoes, and the lobolo money was fixed at £ 8 by the chiefs. But this price was soon found to be insufficient by the parents. They wanted £ 10.10.0, ten guineas! They had already learned that, amongst cultivated people and in refined transactions, one speaks of guineas and not of pounds! Later on it went so far as £ 20 for an ordinary girl, £ 30 for a chief's daughter. The average round Lourenço Marques is £ 18, and in the Transvaal £ 25. When a Banyan takes a native wife (or rather a concubine), he can get her for £ 10 and the father consents to this lower price, first because a "White man's" wife is better treated and fed than ordinary native women, and secondly because the Banyan will soon go home, to India, and this kind of marriages are tacitly looked upon as temporary. The influx of money had also the following unexpected result on the native custom: there are two kinds of lobolo, 1) the lobolo which a boy obtains from his sister's marriage, and which he employs with the consent of the family to get a wife for himself; this is the true old-fashioned way for him to contract a marriage; 2) the acquired lobolo won by a boy who has worked for it, and who has *started a herd for himself* (tisungulela ntlhambi). This second kind of lobolo became much easier to procure under the new conditions, especially when a stay of one year or two in Johannesburg was long enough to save the necessary sum. Boys who had no sister, and who would have

been destitute in former times, could then dream of a *tshenwge* viz., of marrying three or four wives ! And they had this advantage that, their wives not having been bought with family property (their sister's oxen), no bakoñwana could disturb them in their domestic happiness, as may happen to those who marry by the first mentioned lobolo.

This leads us to consider :

II. *The original meaning and the consequences of the lobola.*

As we have said previously, the only way of understandig the lobola, as well as other similar payments in kind which we meet with amongst a great number of uncivilized or half civilized nations (1), is to consider it as *a compensation given by one group to another group*, in order to restore the equilibrium between the various collective units composing the clan. The first group acquires a new member : the second one feels itself diminished, and claims something which permits it to reconstitute itself, in its turn, by the acquisition of another woman. This collectivist conception alone explains all the facts.

In this way, the acquired wife, though she keeps her shibongo (clan name), becomes the property of the first group. She is aggregated to it by complicated marriage ceremonies, representing the passage from one family to another. She is owned by the new family, herself and the children who will be born of her. She is not a slave at all, but she is owned, nevertheless. She is not the individual property of one man, but the collective property of a group. Hence the following facts :

1) Her whole family take part in the marriage ceremonies, especially on the day when the lobola is brought by the bridegroom (See page 109). Every male member of the group has his say in the matter.

(1) See A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage,* p. 170. The *Kalym* of the Turk-Mongolians, the *Nyen* of Southern Thibet, etc., correspond to the Bantu lobola.

2) Brothers will always be ready to help a poor relative to lobola : they work for their group.

3) The acquired wife, is their presumptive spouse, though they cannot have sexual relations with her (matlulana). They will inherit her if the husband dies, according to the laws which I have explained in the preceding paragraphs.

4) Children will belong to the father, live with him, bear his shibongo (family name), and owe him obedience : boys will strengthen this group, girls will be lobota (factitive of lobola — sold in marriage) for his account. Father-right rests on the lobola. This is so plain that any child being born of a woman who has not been paid for, belongs to the mother's family, bears her shibongo name and will live at the malume's village. In Appendix V, I relate the story of Spoon Libombo as an instance of this primordial law. This is the reason why, when the question is discussed, men insist so much on the preservation of the lobola. They say : " Who will guarantee to us the possession of our children if lobola is suppressed ? "

So the lobola is by no means a purchase made by the husband, and still less a present given to the wife's parents.

1) Advantages of the lobola custom

In the primitive collective stage of society the custom had certainly *great advantages :* 1) It strengthens the family, I mean the patriarchal family, the right of the father. 2) It marks the difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate marriage and, in this sense, fills the post of an official register of marriages. 3) It puts hindrances in the way of breaking the matrimonial union, as a wife cannot definitely leave her husband without her group returning the lobola. Therefore it obliges the married pair to have a certain regard one for the other.

However these advantages must not be exaggerated. Marriages concluded on the lobola base, are frequently broken. The tie being purely material, it is easy to cut it. When the husband " bitana tihomu ", claims his oxen, who could refuse

to return them ? It is certainly erroneous to say that the lobola is a contract made between two families in order to guarantee the good treatment of the wife by her husband and vice versa, to prevent the husband beating his wife or the wife deserting the conjugal home from mere caprice. It has even been asserted that this sum of money was a pledge, a security, claimed by the wife's parents for the protection of their daughter ! There is nothing of the kind in this institution. The exhortations addressed to the bride on the day of her *hloma* (page 119) prove clearly enough that, on the contrary, owing to the lobola, the husband has every right over her, and that she has nothing to say if he uses or abuses this right.

2) Bad consequences of the lobola custom

1) And this is the first *regrettable consequence of the lobolo*: the woman is certainly reduced to an *inferior position* by the fact that she has been lobola. *a*) This appears clearly in the fact that, though she is not looked upon exactly as a head of cattle, a girl to be married is in principle entirely at the mercy of her family as regards the choice of her husband. So is a widow to be inherited, in the hands of her deceased husband's family. Men are often better than their principles, and we have seen in the study of marriage and inheritance customs that the consent of a girl, and of a widow, is generally asked before any decision takes place. This is done as long as the male masters of the woman have no special interest in the choice. But should they have reason to impose a certain husband upon her, they will not hesitate to force her to accept him; a young girl will be given up to a dirty old man, for whom she has no sympathy, on account of a lobola debt of twenty years standing ! The lobola hardens the hearts and the woman is unable to defend herself. She can always run away. But where will she hide if all her relatives agree on her being sacrificed for the interest of the family ? Or she can threaten to commit suicide, and she occasionally does so. *b*) She must work for her husband who gives

her very little in return. It is true that she is not a *slave*. However she is *owned*. *c*) This is partly the cause of the shocking difference established between a husband and his wife. The married woman is henceforth absolutely prohibited from adulterous relations — which is a very good provision indeed — but her husband is quite free in this respect : he has not been bought. *d*) As regards her children, whatever may be her love for them, she does not possess them after all. They belong to the father. If divorce takes place and the lobolo is not returned to the husband, he keeps them and the mother will be separated from them for ever. (1)

2) A second series of consequences arising from this custom are the *strained relations* between the two contracting groups. We have sufficiently insisted on this subject. What makes dealings with parents-in-law so difficult? It is the lobolo, this sum of money which has perhaps not been entirely paid, and the debt remains as a permanent cause of irritation. If there is no reason for friction on that point, the threat of quarrels ending in divorce, is always hanging overhead, as the sword of Damocles. If this eventuality takes place, the sad event will be made ten times more painful by the fearful discussion which will arise by reason of the lobola being reclaimed. And the quarrelling couple will not suffer alone. It may be that another marriage, that of the great mukoñwana, which was perhaps a happy one, will be destroyed in consequence of that divorce. (p. 232) "A ba ruli timbilwin", remarked Mboza. "They don't find peace in their hearts".

These complicated relations due to the lobola, poison the

(1) The Rev. Dieterlen, of Basutoland, in a paper on the lobola, wrote the following words which apply to the Thonga as well as to the Ba-Suto : "A woman married under lobola bears children but possesses none. The children belong to those who gave the cattle. Whatever may be her own merits, she can see her children pass into the hands of the rawest heathen and be given over to the cupidity of rapacious and rascally relatives. She can be illtreated, driven away, abandoned, repudiated : she will have to live without children ; she will resemble a woman who has never had any. She is not supposed to have the heart and the feelings of a mother. And her children are treated as if they had no filial affection."

whole native life. Life would be easy for South African natives. Their wants are few and they have enough to satisfy them under their invariably blue sky. They are mild and good-natured after all. But the lobola affairs fill the African village with hatred and bitterness. *The milandju,* the debts! Milandju comes from landja, to follow, and this etymology is very instructive. A husband whose wife has gone away must *landja* his wife or rather his money. His whole family will help him in following that property until it has been recovered again. Natives will go from one end of the country to the other to follow a few pounds, and at least three quarters of the cases which are brought before the Courts are lobola cases.

III. *Attitude to adopt towards the Lobola custom.*

In explaining the advantages, or the evil consequences, of the custom in the native life, I have already shown that these latter vastly exceed the former. This shows what attitude we ougth to adopt towards it. But before concluding on this point, let us go back to the first principles of sociology.

The White Governements and the religious bodies which are at work amongst the South African natives are all Christian ; they belong to what is called Western Civilisation. Its conceptions as regards the human person are on a totally different level to that of the native tribe. Since the Prophet of Nazareth pronounced these immortal words: " What would a man give for his soul ", the era of individualism has set in. The infinite value of a human being has been discovered and this new principle has become predominant, not only in the religious, but also in the civil sphere. The proclamation during the French revolution of the " rights of man ", which is looked upon as the greatest progress made by modern politics, is a direct result of this assertion of the value of the individual. If every century has to rediscover the formula conciliating the rights of the individual with the interests of collective Society, we all feel that this proclamation has been one of the most precious conquests of humanity.

The lobola custom, invented by a society which is still in the collective, or half collective, stage is incompatible with the enlightened con-

ceptions of Western civilisation, with its politics, its ideas of civil life, as well as its religion. It is inspired by a conception of the human person which belongs to another age. Here a wife belongs to her husband, children belong to their father in a material sense, not in the moral sense which we can alone adopt with our conception of the individual. A boy is nothing but a member of the clan, who must perpetuate its name and glory. A girl is nothing but the means of acquiring a wife for this boy and of so increasing the clan. A wife is nothing but a piece of family property, bought by lobola, and which is consequently inherited by other men when her husband dies. They are not moral human beings and free human beings. The opposition between the collectivist and the Western conception is absolute and, if we believe that we are right, it is the duty of both Colonial Governments and Christian Missions to try to amend this state of things in native society.

The obligation however is not the same for both. A *civil Government*, undertaking to rule a tribe brought into subjection by war or put under the Protectorate of a European power, settling amongst natives still retaining their primitive way of living, cannot pretend to govern them at once according to the laws of civilised nations. It would be an impossibility. Such a Colonial Government must respect native laws and judge cases according to it, otherwise it would not appear to the natives to be just ; and it is indispensable that, in their dealings with uncivilised people, White Authorities should always satisfy this sense of justice which, is so strong amongst natives. However I do not think this respect ought to be pushed too far.

Native Commissioners are quite right when they aim at a progressive change of the laws and customs of primitive collectivist people in the direction of more individual liberty, so that the principles of native society will be amended, and brought to the same base as ours, in course of time. The State has not the power of producing that evolution, but is must be favourable to it, and it must consider with sympathy every effort that is made to elevate and purify the social and familial system of the tribe. It has many means at its disposal to collaborate in this work, as we shall very soon see.

The *Christian Missions* can alone bring about this transformation, acting, as they do, on the hearts of the natives, producing individual conviction in the consciences, opening a new horizon to the minds, creating amongst them a new society. For them the duty of fighting lobola is absolute, and I cannot understand how some missionaries

think it may be tolerated in a Christian church. By them the following reasons ought to be taken into consideration, in addition to those already mentioned :

1. The lobola, being a material means of concluding a marriage tends to lessen the moral conditions of the foundation of a true Christian union, mutual love especially. We know by experience that individual *love* of a young man for a young girl, love as we conceive it, which was scarcely to be met with in the original collective Bantu society, is begining to appear amongst the best of our converts. This will become the right and powerful tie which will more effectually bind conjugal union amongst them.

2 Lobola is intimately connected with polygamy, as a woman bought belongs to the husband's family and must be inherited by his younger brothers. If this man is already married, he is bound to become a polygamist. So is the only brother of many girls who is doomed by the custom to lobola for himself as many wives as the sisters he possesses.

So all the Missions, working amongst the Natives practising the lobola, ought to agree upon a decided fight against it with those moral weapons which spiritual bodies ought exclusively to use. And I would recommend *the following rules* to be universally adopted :

1. *Lobota* is prohibited, viz., any Christian father is not allowed to ask for a lobolo when giving his daughter in marriage : he is converted; he calls himself a christian ; he cannot be allowed a practice which is the negation of the moral character of the human being.

2. In the case of *widows*, be it well understood that, in christian communities, they are free as soon as their husband is dead ; that they keep their children and that, when they go home with them, no money can be claimed by the heirs, whether the woman has been lobola or not.

3. As regards *children*, the *moral right* of possession of both father and mother in them is maintained to the exclusion of a special right arising from the lobola.

4. In the case of *a boy marrying a heathen's daughter*, we cannot prevent him from paying a lobolo. The father is the master and, as we have no moral jurisdiction over him, we cannot oppose his claim. But, be it well understood, this payment will not give the new husband, who is a Christian, all the rights which accompany the lobolo under native law. It would be wise to ask for a written stipulation from the husband in this case, as well as from the Christian father who

gives his girl without lobolo. Let us be on our guard here ! The lobolo being a family property, if the father or the elder brothers do not claim it, being Christians, another heathen relative will always appear on the scene and say: " If you do not want it, I claim it! The girl is *ours* ! " I shall discuss this eventuality later on.

5. When Christian girls, depending upon a heathen father, wish to free themselves from the lobola, which appears to some of them to be a degrading sale, they ought to be encouraged to save money in order to redeem themselves. We have seen many cases in which this proof of energy given by girls has been a blessing for them and for the Church. The same applies to a young widow. who wishes to lead a pure life and to avoid becoming the wife of a polygamist heir.

Should all missionaries agree on these points, the practice of lobola would soon disappear. But *the aid of the State*, which I think is desirable and quite legitimate, if it keeps within the limits of its proper domain, could hasten considerably this evolution of native society and the disappearance of this objectionable custom.

How can a Colonial Government collaborate in this transformation ?

1. *By an official registry department,* particularly a registry of marriages, by means of which the legitimacy of unions contracted before the Registrar will be established. This will meet one of the wants which the lobola custom filled, in the uncivilised state of society : the right of the father will not be contested, though lobolo has not been paid. These native marriages might be registered in two categories, those accompanied with lobolo and those without it.

2. *By lowering* as much as possible *the sum required for lobolo.* This is within the province of the tate. Everywhere the native chief has fixed the amount, which has varied very much. I heard the Portuguese Administrator of Manvisa very rightly suggest to fight the custom by reducing the price. Should, for instance, the lobola be fixed henceforth at £ 5, as money is now so easily found, this would in itself ruin the old heathen practice. The value of a wife would appear so much superior to that trifle that the whole transaction would appear ridiculous. Moreover any woman would be able to redeem herself from the servitude of the lobolo.

3. Native Commissioners could also do much in assisting girls and widows who make the courageous attempt to free themselves. It could very well be enacted as a law that, any widow can free herself of the consequences of lobola by payment of £ 5, or less, and that she may keep her children. Such a provision would be only just, as a

Civilised Government cannot allow a heathen to force a Christian woman to become the wife of a polygamist.

4. We would also ask the Authorities to recognise and proclaim the following principle : — When the first legal claimant, the father or the elder brother, the "master of the lobolo", renounces his right to it, no other relative is allowed to claim it for himself. This is very important. Indeed as the lobolo is collective property, it frequently happens that a heathen relative comes forward and says : "I want it". Sometimes the Christian parents cannot, or will not, oppose his claim. It may even happen that a father has consented to give his daughter without lobolo and, when he dies, his heirs who may be raw heathen, will lodge their claim for the sum which the man had generously foregone. This is the reason why we should recommend a statement to be drawn up in each case of renunciation of lobola. This paper could always be shown to anybody trying to interfere with a lawful marriage, celebrated without lobola. In the same way the heathen heirs of a Christian husband, who has paid a lobolo to his father-in-law, could not lay claim to the widow.

* * *

The eradication of the lobola will take long, but it must take place if native society is to overstep the level of collective social life, and to be raised to the status of a civilised community. There will be a transition period during which both natives and their civilisers will have to show much patience, tact and ability ; many hard cases will arise. The story of Fos and Mboza, which I narrate in Appendix VI illustrates these difficulties. But, whatever they may be, the reform is worth every effort and I will borrow my conclusion from a native whom I once heard speak with splendid clearness and conviction on the subject. This man, an evangelist called Zebedea, brought an old native to me, named Tumben, a Christian who was still very much attached to heathen customs. They discussed before me this question : Must Tumben claim a lobolo owed to him, in order to pay a lobolo which he owes to somebody else ? The old man thought he was entitled to make his claim. Zebedea asserted that he was not, and the evangelist was right. Christian spirituality required of Tumben that he should renounce the lobolo because he was a convert ; on the other hand he could not decline to pay his lobola debt to his creditor who was a heathen, and could not consequently accept the Christian

point of view. The case was hard for the old man and the fight between his conscience and his interest was sad to witness. Zebedea found convincing arguments : " These lobola debts ",he said, " are ropes which start from the neck of one and go to the neck of the other. Though your father dies, this rope still ties you, you keep tied to your father's bones by this cursed rope ! Others will get drawn into its coils and the strands become entangled round you ! Cut it and be free ! "

F. POLYGAMY

I. *Origin and spread of Polygamy amongst the Thonga.*

Polygamy is uniformally practised all through the tribe. This is not to say that every man has many wives ; the automatic regulation, by which the number of males is always about equivalent to that of females and which has been recognised by physiology, has its effect also amongst natives, and, in ordinary circumstances, women are not more numerous than men in Bantu tribes. Many men are monogamists... not by choice, but by force of circumstances. Others are wandering about in Johannesburg, or Kimberley, and marry later in life, whilst girls marry much earlier. In the villages round Lourenço Marques the headman often has two or three wives. Three is already an unusual number. The chiefs, of course, take more, and Mubvesha, for instance, the chief of Nondwane, had as many as thirty. In the Gaza country chiefs go even further, at least they used to do so in the good old time, under Gungunyane. Bingwane, the chief of the Ba-Tswa, had taken so many wives that he hardly knew them and at any rate did not know all his children.

What is the origin of the custom ? It might be assumed that it is a remnant of the old system of group marriage, supposing that Bantu have also passed through that stage of family evolution. At one time all men of a group would have considered as their wives all the women of another group, and vice versa.

It was a state of polygamy and polyandry at the same time. The fear of the matlulana (page 133) would have put a stop to polyandry, and polygamy would have alone survived. Or it might be supposed that monogamy existed first and that polygamy appeared in latter times, owing to the following reasons: 1) *Wars* diminished the number of men. As women were not anxious to remain " old maids ", and as the tribe wanted to make the most of them, in order to increase and strengthen itself, the unmarried ones were taken by married men and so the polygamic family arose. In fact polygamy was very much fostered by the Gungunyane wars, during the historic period. Every year the Ngoni chief planned expeditions against his Ba-Chopi enemies on the coast, North of the mouth of the Limpopo. Men were killed and women enslaved, each of whom became the wife of her capturer. The position of these slaves was not very bad: however they were called *tinhloko*, heads, (a word which has the same meaning as heads of cattle), and could be sold by their owner. A great many of these Chopi women were bought in and round Lourenço Marques, before the suppression of slavery. Hundreds of them still live there and are recognised by their very broad, coarse features. 2) The *laws of succession* which regulate the present agnatic Thonga family also lead to polygamy as a necessary consequence. A young brother inherits the widow of his elder brother, be he married or not. Should polygamy have begun in the second way, its increase in later times is not to be wondered at! It answers admirably to the Bantu ideal of life. As we saw, a man who has a harem, tshengwe (page 128), is a man who has succeeded in his career! This is the proper way of becoming a rich man, an ideal which is by no means confined to the black race! On the other hand sensuality develops very quickly in the polygamic family and its very development reacts on the custom and tends to foster it.

I do not think the origin of polygamy can be traced with certitude. However, there are amongst the Thonga some striking customs, giving to the " first " or " great wife " a special position, which seem to confirm the hypothesis of a primitive

monogamy. The first of these is the ritual incision made by the first wife in the inguinal region after the death of the husband; it is not performed by the other widows. (p. 198). In the same way the widower accomplishes this rite only after the death of the first wife and not when " little wives " die. The second one is met with, in the rite of the foundation of the village; as we shall see in the next chapter, the first wife has a special part to play in these significant customs. When I asked Magingi, an old Rikatla heathen, why such a difference was made between the first wife and her co-wives, he told me : " The first one is the true one and the others are but thieves. That is why it is said at the death of the first wife : the house of the husband has been crushed (a tjhobekelwi hi yindlu ya kwe). When another dies, it is only said : he has lost a wife (a felwi hi nsati) "...

The kind of sacredness which surrounds the first wife appears even more plainly in the case of the marriages of chiefs. The principal wife of the chief is in one sense not the actual first one, but the woman who has been bought with the money collected by his subjects and whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship (See Part III). Generally the " wife of the country " is not the first in date. At her death the chief does not perform the incision : the first in date remains the first from the ritual point of view. All these facts show that, for the Thonga, there is a deeper, more mystical conception of matrimony than at first appears, when we consider their present polygamic family. For them, true, complete matrimony is the union of two persons, not of three or ten, and little wives are not much more than concubines. This feeling might very well be explained by the supposition that the race has passed through a previous monogamic phase.

II. *Consequences of polygamy.*

A happy consequence of the custom is that, in the primitive Bantu tribe, no disconsolate old maid is to be found. This is an advantage no doubt. I fear, however, when monogamy sets in, this unblessed singleness will follow in its train.

But the evils of polygamy by far exceed its few advantages !

1) The first is the dreadful development of sexual passion which occurs amongst polygamists. White people, who have lived in close touch with natives in a head kraal where men have many wives, can bear testimony to the frightful excesses in which they indulge. See Note, 12, the observations of Dr Liengme at Gungunyana's residence.

2) A second evil, resulting from the custom, is the domestic quarrelling which prevails in the villages of polygamists. There is a special term which indicates the peculiar jealousy of a wife towards her co-wives, *bukwele*. The prefix *bu*, in Bantu languages, designates abstract things, ideas, feelings. It also is an indication of a place. *Bukwele* therefore also means the special spot between the court yards, where wives of one man go to insult each other (rukutelana). The story of Leah and Rachel, in the book of Genesis, can give some idea of the reason of such quarrels ! Sometimes the husband amuses himself in developing these by no means edifying feelings amongst his spouses. Tobane says : -He will tell bad things (psitokoro) to one of his wives, his favourite, about another one who perhaps is superior to her. He says to her : " You are much nicer than so and so ! She is not like a woman (A nga twali lepsaku i wansati) ". The favourite will make haste to report to her superior what she has heard. She will make her notice that the husband calls at her hut more frequently than at the others... The superior becomes angry and people will say of the husband : " A ni gudjulisana, a ni bandjisana ", " he makes his wives hit against each other ". He himself, after a time, will try to regain the goodwill of the despised one (a ta mu batela). She will violently repel him. He may even kill a chicken to bring about reconciliation ! One can easily imagine the jealous scenes which occur in the village of a polygamist ! (1)

(1) Here is a pretty little Nkuna song about bukwele. A despised wife sings :

Rirakara ra mina ri khele hi wanuna,
Wanuna a nyika dokori ya kwe !
My nice little pumpkin has been plucked by my husband !
My husband has given it to his favourite !

3) Polygamy, when practised on a large scale, even causes *the ruin of the family*. Two examples show this clearly. First the case of Bingwana, to whom I have already alluded. He had a great number of wives and used to place them in his various villages, viz., in the capital itself and in all the districts of his

Phot. A. Borel.

Chief Mubvesha with some of his wives (Nondwane 1907).

kingdom, going round from place to place to visit them. But they were so numerous that he could not suffice them. So they were committing adultery wholesale with the men of those villages. The result was that Bingwana had hundreds of children and that, in the end, he married his own daughters without him knowing it. He died tragically. The Gungunyana's yimpis surrounded his fortress (khokholo). His son, Sipenenyana, fled during the night and he remained alone. Then he

She sings this song to excite a quarrel... after which she hopes that she will obtain her rights.

shut himself up in a hut where he had gathered together his treasures and his gunpowder. He set fire to it and died in the flames.

The second example is that of Mubvesha who died on Nov. 5 th 1910, a fellow of little character, whose intrigues caused the war of 1894-1896 and who was installed by the Portuguese, as Chief of the Nondwana country at the close of that war. (See Appendix VII). He used to lobola the younger sisters of his wives (tinhlantsa) when they were still little girls, and had between thirty and fifty spouses. But he was frightfully jealous, keeping them in their villages, away from all the world, under the supervision of a trustworthy induna. All the men were prohibited from crossing the large road which separated this district from the rest of the country. The result is to be seen on the photograph taken in 1908, when I paid him a visit in his kraal. He was a man of sixty five or seventy. His younger wives were over thirty; I saw *one* child only, called Nwadambu, after the surname of the Nondwane Portuguese Administrator. One child and thirty wives ! That shows the result of polygamy when practised under such conditions. It ruins the family.

III. *Attitude to adopt towards Polygamy.*

Practically, what must be the attitude of the Government and of Missions towards this custom ?

1. As regards civilised Governments, having still to reckon with native law, they cannot at once prohibit every form of polygamy.

But when they have established marriage registration, it seems that they ought not to allow unions posterior to the first one to be considered as legitimate. These marriages ought not to be registered, and if this difference were strictly enforced, by and by natives would become more aware of the illegitimate character of polygamic marriages. In the Transvaal, the Native Affairs Department at one time tried to fight against the custom directly in the following manner: as every man has to pay taxes according to the number of his wives, the

tax for the first wife was fixed at £ 2, and he had to pay the double of that sum for each extra wife. But the provision was abandoned later on. The taxation has, however, everywhere the effect of limiting polygamy. In Portuguese territory natives are taxed according to the number of huts they possess. As each wife dwells in a separate house, polygamists are more heavily taxed than others.

Provisions like these are, I suppose, all that a Government can do. It cannot suppress polygamy as long as the tribal system still holds good. But what a law cannot effect, moral teaching can and, in fact, the Christian Missions have long ago begun to fight against this evil.

2. All missionaries, who have lived amongst the Bantu and know something of native life, agree on one point: Polygamy is incompatible with the high moral ideal, and with the family ideal which Christianity has brought into the world. Therefore they all work against it. They all also agree that a polygamist, who wants to become a Christian, must by no means be prevented from doing so. He is to be accepted as an inquirer and a candidate for baptism. But divergence of view begins on the question of receiving a polygamist into full churchmembership by baptism. We can distinguish four different points of view on this question, corresponding to four different courses: the latitudinarian, the idealistic, the extreme and the midway course.

The *latitudinarian view* taken by Bishop Colenso, for instance, is this : (I quote freely from *Ten weeks in Natal*, pages 139-140). "Enforcing separation on polygamist converts is quite unwarrantable. They have been married according to the practice of their land. We have no right to require them to cast off their wives and cause these poor creatures in the eyes of all their people to commit adultery! What is to become of their children? And what is the use of our reading to them the Bible stories of Abraham, Israel and David with their many wives. etc. Let us admit polygamists of old standing to communion". The only difference which Bishop Colenso would admit, between polygamists and monogamists, is that the former ought not to be admitted to offices in the church. The hope of those who hold this opinion is that, as polygamy is not to be allowed to young people, it will disappear of its own accord in the next generation. I am afraid, on this point, the reasoning might be wrong. Unhappily, natives, in the present low state of their moral conscience, are quite cunning enough to delay their conversion until they are polygamists, in order to enjoy both carnal and spiritual blessings!

The *idealistic view* is taken by those who are satisfied with a promise on the part of the husband, and his extra wives to have no conjugal relations any more, and allow the separated spouses to remain in the husband's village, and the husband to care for them and their children. From an ideal point of view, the provision would be excellent and save much difficulty. But practically it is very dangerous, as we can hardly expect a native husband to keep such a promise made in order to be baptised. Sooner or later, it is to be feared that he will again make use of his rights; he will be thus led to deceive his missionary, pretending to be monogamist, but leading the life of a polygamist. Experience shows that, unhappily, this fear is too well founded.

The *extreme point of view*. In some cases missionaries have required not only total separation, a new and far away domicile for the separated wives, but that the husband should reclaim all the lobola oxen, in order to break any tie still existing between him and them. This practice may be legitimate when we have reasons to doubt the good faith of the converted polygamist. But it ought not to be commended as a general rule, as it would make separation almost impossible. Would the parents of the separated wife be ready to give back the oxen, when the union is broken, not from any fault on the part of their daughter, but only for conscience sake on the part of the husband? In this vexed question, we must put as few hindrances as possible in the way; as regards the husband, he must be ready to lose the lobola money which he gave for the separated wives.

The midway course, which is followed by almost all the Missionary Societies, set forth in the regulations of the Berlin Society and in the report of the Anglican Conference of Bishops at Lambeth is the following one: Polygamists must not be admitted to baptism, but be accepted as candidates and kept under Christian instruction until such a time as they shall be in position to accept the law of Christ. (Resolution of the Lambeth Conference; See Edinburgh World Missionary Conference Report of Com. II). Wives of polygamists, on the other hand, ought not to be denied baptism, if they deserve it, as it is not in their power to separate from the polygamic family.

This great principle being admitted, many questions of detail arise for which I would recommend the following solutions:

1. Which wife should be retained? Is it the first wife, or the Christian wife (supposing that the others are still heathen), or the wife who has the greatest number of children? No fixed rule has been adopted by any Mission, so far as I know, and each case must be judged on its

own merits and according to the higher principles of Christianity, the husband being exhorted to follow the course which is the most beneficial, not to himself but to the others.

2. The cast-off wives ought not to be rejected in any way. They ought to return to their parents, and their former husband ought to facilitate by all means their remarriage under the best possible conditions. I even think that he ought occasionally to provide them and their children with clothing, so that they should not feel abandoned. As regards food, they are not to be pitied, as, amongst the Bantu, it is the wife who provides the food for the family !

3. The question of the children is the most difficult, and sometimes it is impossible to solve it quite satisfactorily. When they are still young, they naturally follow the mother. Fathers find it very hard to part from them. Why? Doubtless on account of their natural love for them ; but, if you search deeper into their hearts, you will probably find other reasons. Perhaps unconsciously they still think, according to the old Bantu law, that children, especially girls, must bring a material advantage to their father. When they really adopt the spiritual Christian point of view that a father has more duties to perform for the sake of his children than benefits to derive from them, the separation is no longer difficult.

4. Of course no Christian husband must be allowed to inherit a widow, nor to claim a lobola should this woman be married to another man.

" The change from polygamy to monogamy must involve great difficulties and even hardships ", said the Bishops at Lambeth... " No trouble or cost or self-sacrifice ought to be spared to make any suffering which may be caused as light and easy to bear as possible "... However the question at stake is most important. The very fate of the Bantu Church, and of the future society, depends on its solution, and a strict adherence to principle is necessary during this time of transition.

CHAPTER II

The life of the village.

The Thonga village (muti) is not a hap-hazard agglomeration of people. It is a social organism whose composition is well defined and which is regulated by strict laws. After all, it is but an enlarged family: the headman and the old people who have fallen to his charge, his wives, his younger brothers and their wives, his married sons, his unmarried sons and daughters. All these people form a community whose life is most interesting to study.

Let us describe its outward appearance, the laws of its "foundation" and "moving", its organisation under the headman, the doings of its different members and the rules of etiquette which are observed. If our first chapter has given us an insight into the internal constitution of the Thonga family, this will show us how their social organism, which is at the base of all the tribal life, manifests itself outwardly in the village.

A. THE THONGA VILLAGE

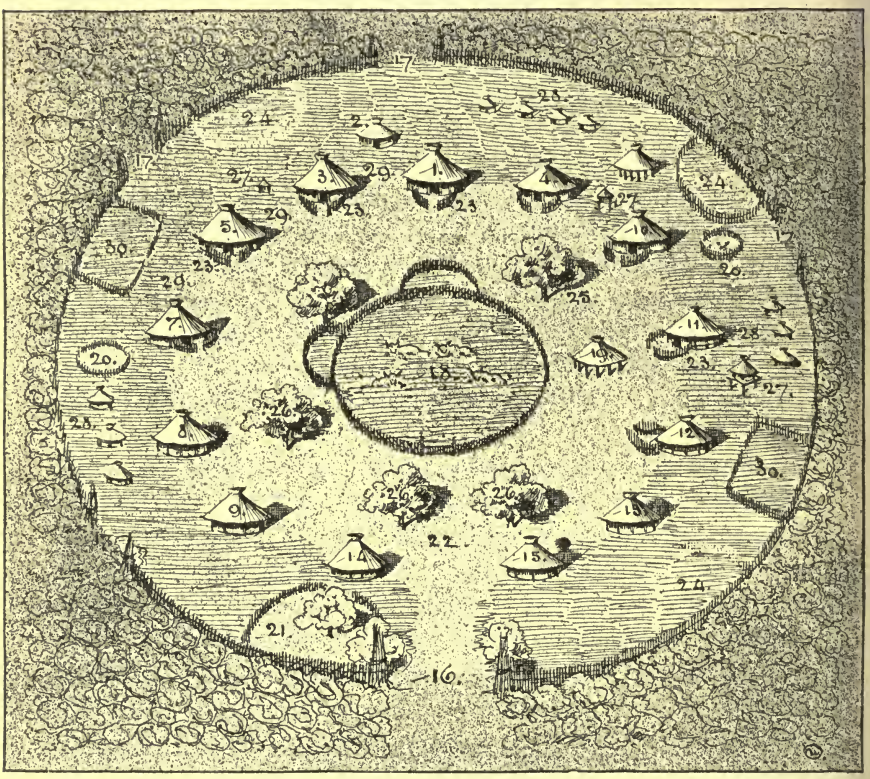
We have already caught a glimpse of it, from the inside, through the eyes of the headman Gidja (p. 126). Now we enter it from outside, as foreigners, with the curiosity of the ethnographer and the philosophical preoccupation of the sociologist.

The Thonga villages present a remarquable uniformity all over the tribe. The same laws overrule their construction in the Ronga as in the Northern clans. Let us suppose we have left Lourenço Marques and reached the Mabota and Nondwane district, fifteen miles to the North, far enough from the town,

where the ugly galvanised iron sheds have not yet supplanted the old typical hut. We see, in the bush, on the slope of the sandy dune, a little forest of mimosa, *minkanye*, *mikawakwa* (Strychnos). In its midst nestles a village. Thonga like to build amongst trees, to protect themselves against the terrible South winds which very often blow across the plain, and perhaps also to shield themselves from the inquisitive eyes of people who pass along the road. The little community likes to live by itself, as it is entirely self-sufficing. This small wood is also used for other purposes... Thonga have not yet learned to build the kind of outhouse which is described in English by two letters only (W.C.), and they "go outside" (humela handle) in the little copse. The air is not very pure when we cross it; so we hasten to reach the village. The adjoined schematic drawing represents a combination of features observed in many Thonga kraals. It is rare that a " muti" is as complete as this one.

We first note the external circular fence (*lihlampfu*). It is made of branches, thorny or not, one and half to two feet high, more or less rotten. It is not built as a protection against enemies. In this tribe, villages are not fortified, and, in cases of war, the only ressource is flight. The fence protects against spiritual enemies, the witches, as we shall see later on. The path leads us straight to the main entrance (16) the *mharana*, which is three or four feet wide. But the fence is open at some other places for narrower passages called *psiruba* (17), one for about every three huts; these smaller openings lead to the wood and are used only by the inhabitants to " humela handle ". Passers by, as a rule, do not enter by such back gates. They are private. On either side of the large gate is often seen a growing tree and some poles, which clearly show the entrance. This is never closed during the day. At our right a little court with some broken pots which denote a fire-place, is the *bandla* (21), the place where men congregate. In front of us, at the other extremity of the circle, is the headman's hut (1) or rather the hut of his principal wife. On the way to it, we cross the *hubo* (22) the central square and pass round the *ranga*, (Ro.), *shibaya*

or *shibala* (Dj.) (18), the oxen kraal, when the village possesses oxen. They are rare now, the plague and Texas-fever having more than decimated the herds. Small enclosures at the



Drawn by J. Wavre.

Schematic representation of the Thonga village.

1. Hut of the headman's first wife. 2. Headman's private hut. 3. Hut of the headman's second wife. 4. of the third one; 5. of the fourth. 7 et 8. Huts of the two wives of the headman's younger brother. 9. Wife of third brother. 10. Wife of fourth brother. 11. Headman's son. 12. Headman's nephew. 13. Hut of a stranger. 14. Lao of the boys. 15. Nhangu of the girls. 16. Great. entrance. 17. Back gates. 18. Oxen kraal. 19. Goats' kraal. 20. Pigs' kraal. 21. Square of the men (bandla). 22. Square of the village (hubo). 23. Fire places. 24. Ash-heaps. 25. Tree of the village. 26. Shade-trees of the hubo. 27. Henhouse. 28. Storehouses. 29. Place of jealousy. 30. Tobacco-gardens.

sides are reserved for the calves, which are kept there when the cows go to feed during the afternoon. On the right a small hut, a conical roof supported by poles without a wall so as to let the air circulate, is the goats' kraal (19). It may be placed somewhere else, behind the huts, for instance; or sometimes goats are tethered every night by the leg to sticks round the hubo. The pigs are never kept on the hubo, but always behind the hut: they are newcomers in the Thonga village and have hardly yet won their "droit de cité". Let us salute, on passing by it, the tree (25) which is, as we shall see, the mystical stem of the village. We might see, hanging upon it, a piece of clothing offered to the gods, or at its base a broken pot which is the *gandjelo*, the altar of the village. The gandjelo is often placed, by preference, among the poles of the main entrance on the right. The village tree, which has a ritual significance, is not to be confounded with the trees of the hubo (26), which are but *mindjuti*, shade-trees, under which one likes to sit.

So we reach the main hut which faces the gate. It is the proper dwelling of the headman. In hut 3 lives his second wife, in 4, his third and in 5 his fourth. 2 is called *shilubelo*. Great personages, men owning a large kraal, like to build such a hut which is smaller than the ordinary ones and where no woman sleeps. It is his own hut, where people *luba*, viz., pay their homage to him: a kind of office of the master of the village! He may sleep in it and call his wives to come there. But he generally prefers to sleep in his wives' huts, one month in each, according to the polygamic custom.

Behind 4 and 10 is a *mhala*, a shed for the implements. It is built, as the goats' kraal, without plaster walls and is smaller than a hut. There may be three or four of them in the village.

The headman and his wives occupy the back of the village. On the sides live his younger brothers, one of them, who has two wives, in 7 and 8, two others, those who have but one wife each, in 9 and in 10 respectively. In 11 lives a married son; in 12 it may be a nephew, son of the headman's sister, or a son-in-law; (see page 239). 13 might be the hut of a stranger (mulubeti), who has asked permission to stay

with the headman of the village, as he wished to be under his protection. The case is not frequent, but this can happen and, to be received into the mystic unity of the community, this man will have to "hlamba ndjaka" (See page 153), together with all the inhabitants of the kraal. The two huts near the entrance are, on the left, the *lao*, where unmarried boys sleep (14) and to the right (15) the *nhangu* where girls live. Often the nhangu is built behind the huts of the mothers, near the mhala; thus the girls are there kept under more effective watch. The boys of the *lao* have to guard the door which they close at night where it is the custom to do so. The *hubo* and the *bandla*, the squares, are generally kept quite clean.

In front of each hut is a *yard* (*ndangu* pl. *mindangu*, 23) which is also generally well swept. In the centre of each of them are some broken pots (mapseko), or pieces of hard clay taken from ant-hills (psirubu); it is the *fireplace (shitiko)*, where the mistress of the hut cooks her food. The enclosure of the yard was, as a rule, made of poles or even trunks of trees planted near each other and forming a circular wall. Nowadays, especially amongst the Ronga, these yards are enclosed with reeds and can be built square, a single wall fencing off as many as three or four huts. The top of this wall is sometimes crenelated. I rather think this arrangement is modern: the circular wall of the ndangu is an old custom and the proof is this: on the day of *hloma*, when the bride's-maids and female relatives bring the bride to her husband, they not only build up the woodpile (shigiyane, see page 113), but, in the Northern clans, they must also erect a new ndangu which will be called *tsa-ndana*, and so people will know that in the yard there is a *nhlomi*, a bride, working for her mother-in-law! The ndangu is the place where women tell the folk-tales of the tribe to the children and to each other, whilst they attend to their cooking, or after the evening meal.

If cleanliness prevails on the square and in the yards, the same cannot be said of the region between the huts and the fence. It is called *mahosi* or *makotini*. It is the place where old baskets and broken pots are kept. The chicken houses

(*shihahlu*, 27) are built there ; these are generally little huts, with reed walls, placed on a floor of palmtree boards, supported by four poles forked at their upper extremities. The *ash-heaps* are somewhat further on (24). They are called *tala*, and play a part in certain rites, representing, as it would seem, the place of desolation and of sorrow. (Think of Job and see the rite of ringela bovumba, page 191). The *store houses* (*psitlanta*

Phot. A. Borel.

The interior of a Ronga village. (Nondwane).

(Ro.), *psitlati* (Dj.), 28) are close by and are built in various forms : little huts with reed walls, when made for the mealies, with plastered walls, when made to contain ground nuts or sorgho (*madulu* (Dj.). They sometimes are placed on a palm-tree floor resting on short poles, or they are suspended to the boughs of a tree. *Pigs' kraals* (*hoko* 20) are to be found in the same region, sometimes they are placed even further in the forest on account of their offensive smell.

Mealie leaves, heaps of makanye stones, broken mortars and out of use pestles lie about behind the huts. If anyone wants

to keep the place tidy, he can plant pine apples there (30), or tobacco, or Chili-pepper (biribiri). Pumpkin plants often creep over all this disorder. Flowers of European origin are sometimes seen on the hubo in the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, especially "everlastings", white or pink which have spread all over the coast.

Having now finished our first general inspection, let us add some details about the huts and the places in the village.

The hut, the construction of which we shall describe later on, (Part IV) has an opening (nyangwa) of variable dimensions closed by a door. In some parts of the Gaza country it is so small that one must positively crawl to enter. Everywhere one must at any rate stoop low down (korama). As regards the *threshhold* (ntjandja wa shipfalo), it is not taboo to step over it. However the headman's threshhold is dreaded because it has been treated with medicines when the hut was built : so it is taboo to sit on it; these powerful medicines might hurt and even cause death. In the middle of the black clay floor is a kind of raised circle, in the centre of which fire is occasionally lighted in winter on account of the cold. It is the interior *shitiko*. Cooking may be done here if it rains ; glowing embers sometimes remain on it during the night and numberless babies have been burnt to death falling into the fire, while their mothers were sleeping. At the left, on entering, is the sleeping place (shilawo) of the wife, on the right that of the husband. However they both generally spread their mats on the right and sleep beside each other. It is only during the taboed periods (menses, nursing times) that the husband must keep to his own particular side (p. 187).

The back of the hut is generally occupied by the big basket (ngula) in which clothing, and seeds are kept. This spot is called *mfungwe*. In the roof (*lwangu*) are fixed or hang a number of various articles : ears of sorghum or millet, cobs to be used as seed at the next sowing, assagais, sticks and knobkerries etc., and against the walls one frequently notices rough drawings made with white clay, or, in the vicinity of towns, chromos of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, or Don Carlos, as the case may be!

The hubo and the bandla differ from each other. *Bandla* is a Zulu word which has supplanted the Ronga term *shisiso*, viz., "the place where one finds shelter from the wind". Men light a small fire there to warm themselves. They also eat together in the bandla, and it is strictly reserved for them. Women are allowed to penetrate into it only when they bring the food. Boys must remove the ashes from the fireplace not women. The *hubo*, on the contrary, is open to all. A shed is sometimes built on it to afford shelter during the rainy days. There are special acts always performed on the hubo : the cutting up (shindla), the slaughtering and butchery of animals and the feast of "eating the head". The head of any slaughtered ox belongs to the men, and they eat it together on the hubo (See letter C.). It is the proper business of the young men to keep the hubo clean, and they sometimes assemble to pull up the grass which may have grown on it. In former times it was taboo to come to the hubo with sandals. Sandals are used for hunting and must be taken off before entering the village.

Another place to which I have already alluded is the *bukwele*, the "place of jealousy", where angry co-wives insult each other! On our diagram it would be located between 5 and 4, for the wives of the headman.

The Thonga village, this closed circle of huts, is a living organism. All its members form a whole whose unity is remarkable. This common life never appears in a more striking way than at the evening meal. Let us look at our diagram. In every yard the mistress of the hut has cooked her mealies and her sauce in different pots, and, when the sun sets, she distributes the contents (phamela) in wooden or earthen plates. The largest is for the husband. He is sitting on the bandla with his companions, the other men of the village, and the youths waiting for the meal. All these plates, generally carried by small girls or boys, converge on the men's gathering. All do not necessarily contain the ordinary mealies pap; some are filled with manioc, some with sweet potatoes, etc. The men attack the first one, all of them taking the food with their fingers. They pass on to the second plate and so on to the last one. Mean-

while each mother has filled other smaller plates, one for the girls, one for the boys, one for herself. She has even sent to each of the other women of the village a little of her cooking, and the others have done the same for her; so each member of the community, when he or she has finished the meal, will have eaten a little of all that which has been cooked on all the fires. It is impossible to imagine a more perfect communism than this as regards food! I myself witnessed this custom of the evening meal in Spoon Libombo's village in Rikatla. Amongst the inhabitants of the kraal there were two blind male adults, the wife of one of them being half blind herself; the wife of the other was an old woman who could hardly till a few square yards of mealies and ground nuts, and keep the birds and the hens away from them. Spoon's wife and the wife of another man of the village alone were healthy and able to work normally. So the whole burden rested on their shoulders, as the share the other women could take in the feeding of the men was necessarily small. However I never heard Spoon grumble; being the headman, he made it a point of honour that all the people dwelling with him should have enough to eat. Everybody who has lived with South African natives, has admired their wonderful readiness to share any food they may have with those present. Even children are much superior in this respect to White children. I attribute this virtue to the community of food which reigns in the Bantu village, and which is certainly one of the nicest features of Kafir socialism. The village life has not taught bad customs only to the Thonga.

B. MOVING A VILLAGE AND FOUNDING A NEW ONE

Large kraals similar to the one shown on our illustration, were more numerous in former times than now. It is rare to meet with such a number of huts and so many people under one headman. Why? Because, say my informants, the witchcraft superstition has considerably increased in latter times. Suppose the wife of one of the younger brothers die: the divina-

tory bones have revealed that this death is due to a witch ; they have gone so far as to designate one of the wives of the headman as being guilty. No common life is any longer possible. The widower will move somewhere else and build a fence around his own huts to protect them against would-be-witches. In this way many villages are dismembered by fear of witchcraft. Generally speaking the Thonga village can not long remain of any considerable size : it tends to fall to pieces.

But there are other causes which may destroy the village and the idyllic life of the small community. Death of the headman, and lightning striking the village, are the two main causes which may determine this eventuality.

Death of the headman. There is a mystic tie between this man and the social organism which is under him. Should he die, the village dies also... It is not abandoned at once. The whole year of mourning will elapse before the moving. But as soon as the widows and property have been distributed, the successor of the deceased will go and found his own village and the old one will remain a ruin (rumbi). Should any one else die, his hut will merely be thrown into the bush and the village will not be abandoned. But should these deaths increase, then the divinatory bones may order the place to be deserted, as it is defiled and dangerous.

If the *lightning* strikes the hubo, it is a very bad omen. The medicine man who has the power of " treating the place struck by lightning " is called in. Should he be able to exhume from the ground the mysterious bird which causes lightning, or at least the coagulated urine which it has deposited, and which is called Heaven (See Part VI), the people are allowed to stay. But if he does not discover it deep down in the soil, the village must move, as the presence of the mysterious power of Heaven inside the circle of huts would bring disaster. This is a taboo.

An other cause of moving is the *exhaustion of the gardens.* When the fields are " tired " (karala) and do not produce sufficient food for the inhabitants, they leave the place and look for pastures new. In this case the bones will be consulted.

Sometimes, even, the village may be transported somewhere else for the unique reason that people are tired of the place and want to change. If the bones confirm their wishes, they will move.

The Foundation of a new village is the occasion of most interesting and characteristic rites, which afford us a new insight into the nature of this social unit, the Tonga *muti*. I shall give the sequence of these rites first in the Northern clans, according to the description of Viguet, and secondly amongst the Ba-Ronga, according to Mboza.

I. *In the Northern clans.*

1) The headman goes first to examine some spots where he would like to build. He *breaks small twigs* from various trees and brings them home.

2) The bones consulted help to *make a choice*. The twigs are placed on a mat one after the other. When the stone of the *kanye* (see Part VI) falls in a certain way in front of one of the twigs, this shows that the tree from which it has been broken is the one near which the hut of the headman must be built.

3) Building material is collected. When everything is ready to proceed to the construction of the huts, the headman goes with his principal wife to the spot chosen. They leave the old village for ever. They must not return to it any more. In the evening they have *sexual relations* in the new place and in the morning they tie together some tufts of living grass. Next day all the people of the old village must come and step upon this grass. This rite is called to *tie the village* (boha muti).

4) Then begins the period, of about one month, called *buhlapfa*, time of moving, which has its laws. Two great taboos dominate it: 1) Sexual relations are absolutely prohibited. Should any body transgress this law, he has sinned gravely against the headman ; he has stolen the village (yiba muti). The headman will be ill, perhaps be paralysed. The guilty

woman will also be punished : she will not be able to bear children anymore; she will be " tied by the village " (bohiwa hi muti). The culprits have " crossed the way of the master of the village " (tjemakanya). Strange to say, the headman himself is bound by this law. He must have no relations *with his younger wives*, because the village belongs to the principal spouse. Should such a transgression be discovered, the work of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to which to move ! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole " buhlapfa ", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

5) The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready, the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new one by all the men together. They lift each roof on their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. " The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed " (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they will also sing their songs insulting the men. But all this is done in fun. It is a great day of rejoicing for the " tinamu ", who tease each other as much as they like. A man can be wanting in respect even to his great mukoñwana on those days !

6) When the huts are ready, the *fence* is built. The family doctor is summoned. The medicine man throws leaves or

stones treated with his drugs along the circular line, where the headman intends placing the branches which will form the future fence of the village. This being done, the men erect the fence.

7) Special precautions are taken for *the great entrance.* Poles are erected on both sides : but before they are put in place, the doctor pours medicine into the holes in the ground and also smears the poles with it at the bottom and at the top. Mankhelu used to bury a black stone, taken out of the river, at the gate. This stone had also been smeared with drugs. "In this way, I prevent enemies from entering. Those who come to try their charms against us (ku hi ringa hi maringo) will be attacked by disease and go and die in their houses".

8) The building is finished. Nothing remains to be done but to *ripen the village* (wupfisa muti). Men and women assemble in two separate groups and ask each other if they have been continent during the whole "buhlapfa". If one of them confesses to have sinned, he has stolen the village from the headman; the whole work is spoiled and must be recommenced somewhere else... If all the members of the community have behaved well, they proceed to a purifying ceremony exactly similar to the *hlamba ndjaka* which takes place during the mourning ceremonies. Each couple has sexual relations according to a fixed order of precedence, one every night, and they all go to trample on the spot where the women wash their hands. The principal wife is the last to perform these rites.

9) Then comes the *drawing to himself of the village by the headman* (kokotela muti). At dawn, after the night when she has had her ritual sexual relations with the headman, his principal wife takes his shield and his assagais and stands at the main entrance, everyone being present. Outside is a thorny branch prepared for the occasion. In her martial attire, she drags this branch to the entrance and closes it.

10) Having closed the village in that way, she *performs a sacrifice.* She sips a mouthful of water from a tumbler, spitting out a portion of it (phahla) towards the people ; then she washes her hands, and throws a little of the water towards them

in order *to give them* the village. This act is accompanied by the following words : " Be not tied by the village ! Bring forth children ; live and be happy and get everything. You gods, see ! I have no bitterness in my heart. It is pure. I was angry because my husband abandoned me, he said I am not his wife ; he loved his younger wives. Now, this is finished in my heart. We shall have friendly relations together... " The prayer being concluded, the headman goes to the main entrance, pushes the thorny branch aside, and opens the village.

11) The last act is the *khangula*, the *inauguration ceremony*. Beer is prepared, neighbours invited and they all drink together, the neighbours coming *to see the new village* (ku bona muti).

As regards the old one, when the moving has been accomplished through the back door widened for the purpose, one of the inhabitants closes the main entrance with a branch. Hence comes the expression which is applied to a village all of whose inmates have died, and which has, on that account, disappeared : " Those people have all died and there has not been even one left to close the gate ".

II. *In the Ba-Ronga Clans.*

The sequence of the rites for the removal of a village is very much the same as in the Northern clans.

1) The headman examines some spots and consults the bones : "Must I built at such and such a tree ?"

2) When the tree has been designated, he goes to it and places at its foot his furniture (nyundju) and his worshipping ustensil, his altar, (a pot, a jar, see Part VI). The altar may be placed at the main entrance later on, if the bones so order it. As already mentioned, there will be a mystic relation between him and that tree. He must never cut it. Should any of the branches be troublesome and he wants to remove them, he must ask some one else to do it. At the day of his death, or rather when his hut is crushed down, a branch of that tree will be put on

the place where was the threshhold, and another one used to close the main entrance of the village; a new entrance being then made through the fence and used as the gate during the rest of the mourning period.

3) He has sexual relations in the new spot on the first night with his principal wife: in this way he will *fuya muri*, viz. "possess this tree", and also *fuya muti*, "possess the village". The Ronga *fuya* corresponds here also to the *boha* of the Northern clans (Compare boha puri and fuya nwana, page 56). If someone precedes him in sexual intercourse, he is guilty: he has "preceded the village" (rangela muti). By this act the headman has definitely left the old village. The other people can go back to it to fetch what remains; for him it is taboo.

4) The same day, all the inhabitants come and move all the roofs, if it is possible to do so in one day. One hut is rapidly built to afford shelter to the inhabitants, in case of rain. The first roof to be transported is that of the hut of the principal wife. This is also done with accompaniment of obscene songs. These songs are not allowed when only one hut is transported, a case which may happen when some one goes to live in another village. It is decidedly a custom which goes with the moving of a whole village.

5) The following day two huts are erected, one for the men, the other for the women, because they must not sleep together. "They are still in the bush; it is buhlapfa; the village is not yet firm". Those who break this law cause havoc to the headman. The bones will soon reveal that "he has been preceded as regards the village; (a rangeliwile muti)." All the huts are smeared twice; the women begin to sleep in them, but not the men. The fence and the main entrance must first be prepared.

6) The *main entrance* (mharana). The men pull up the grass all the way from the back hut to the place where the main entrance must be, so as to make a road all through the village. All the dried plants weeded out during this operation are carefully gathered in a heap. The headman, on the advice of the medicine man, cuts from certain very vigorous trees two branches which can live when transplanted, such as the nkanye

and the ntjondjo. He digs a hole on both sides of the entrance and puts the branches into them. Across the gate, he buries a third branch of the ndjopfa tree, that "which causes oblivion": this will be smeared with special drugs in order to increase its efficacy; it is intended to prevent the baloyi, the witches and the people speaking bad words (litt. "with bad lips"), from thinking about the village and spoiling it.

7) On the evening of that day, the headman and his principal wife have intercourse in their hut and, at dawn, while it is still dark, they go and wash their hands at the main entrance. Mboza does not say that all the other couples must do the same, or trample on the spot. In Nondwane this is sufficient and the rite does not apply to the other couples. But at Manyisa, midway between Lourenço Marques and Khosen, where the Djonga customs are sometimes met with, all the couples must have relations, one after the other, according to order of precedence. It is deemed so important to keep the due order in this "giving to each other the right of resuming sexual life" that, should an elder brother have been absent when the village moved, on his return he must undergo a special treatment in a neighbouring village, during a few days, to avoid any bad consequences resulting from having been unlawfully "preceded" (rangeliwa).

8) After the night during which this sexual rite has taken place, at daylight, all the dried grass is piled in front of the main hut and burnt ritually. The headman throws into the fire a special medicinal pill in order to *give the village over* to his people (nyiketa muti). They all warm their bodies at the fire, and go and set light to all the other heaps of dried grass which they made when clearing the soil.

9) The medicine man comes on that same day, and sprinkles the fence with his drugs, in order to protect the village against bush fires, wizards and disease. He walks all round the fence saying: "Nice village! May misfortune not enter here! These are my drugs!" — He starts from one of the poles of the main entrance and finishes his walk at the other one, hanging upon it the branch with which he was sprinkling.

10) Then he sacrifices with a hen. A young man accompa-

nying him cuts its throat; the doctor plucks some feathers from the neck, sacrifices in the ordinary way and invokes his gods : "You used to treat villages (daha miti) with these drugs and I do the same; I do not act of my own wisdom. You have given it to me; bless this place, etc." Then he plucks a feather from the hen's right wing, and suspends it at the main entrance or in the main hut, inside, over the door, according to the directions given by the bones. This is the *shirungulo* (see Part VI) and the act is called : " to tie the village" (tjimba muti).

Amongst the Ronga, there are some other *buhlapfa taboos :* — It is not allowable to light any fire in a village before it is entirely built. During the whole building period, cooking is done outside the fence; crushing mealies in the mortars and dancing are also prohibited. Whistling (ku ba noti) is forbidden, as it might call the wizards inside the village before it has been protected by the charms.

When a man has many wives, he might build a second village for himself and establish one of them there. A grown-up son, the son of the woman, will represent the headman in that village, but the law of "tying the village" will also be observed in this case. The headman will perform the act with that woman, and preside at the burning of the dried grass and of the medicinal pill, by which he *gives* the village to the inhabitants.

When a younger brother, or a son, leaves the headman and founds a village for himself (tihambela muti), he does it according to the same laws as those observed at the regular moving of a village.

III. *Some remarks about the rules of moving.*

Let us now analyse the two parallel sequences of rites which we have just described, and which complete each other. It is easy to discover amongst them three series of rites, social, protective and passage rites.

1) *Social rites.* The muti, as we have seen, is a little organised community having its own laws, amongst which the most important

seems to be the law of hierarchy. The elder brother is the uncontested master and no one can supersede him. He is the owner of the village... No one must " steal it " from him. Should any one do so, the whole community would suffer and no children would be born : the life of the organism would be deeply affected ; this is the reason why the headman must go first with his principal wife to have relations with her in the new village, and thus *take possession* of it or *tie* it. For this same reason, when the headman dies, the village *must* move. It is taboo to remain in it. As long as the inheritance has not yet been distributed, it is still *his home* (kwa kwe) ; but as soon as the ceremony has taken place, the villagers must go away, and close the door with a thorny branch. The part played by the principal wife in all these ceremonies is most remarkable. It is absolutely imperative that the headman should " tie the village " with her, and not with another of his spouses. Should she be very old, the law must be observed all the same ; should she be ill, unable to have sexual relations, the village can simply not be moved. In the Northern clans we see her taking the shield and the assagai, closing the village and " giving it " to the inmates, even performing a sacrifice and praying to the gods. It is very rare to see a woman presiding at a public religious act : but she is the owner of the village as well as the headman. Moving is imperative when she dies as well as after the death of the headman. The main gate must also be closed and a new entrance made in the fence to be used during the year of mourning ; in the case of her death, this opening must be made on the left of the regular *mbarana*, whilst, when the husband dies, it is made on the right side ; just the same as in the hut, when the corpse is removed for burial. (See page 138).

2) *Protective rites*. These are those which concern the fence. This fence does not afford material protection. The branches dry up very soon and, in the case of a bushfire, for instance, they would do more harm than good. It is a spiritual protection, a barrier of charms, of magic influences, to prevent the entrance of wizards and of all the hostile powers of the bush. We shall understand this better when treating of the witchcraft superstitions. (Part VI).

3) *Passage rites*. The reader will have been astonished to notice, amongst the ceremonies of the moving of villages, many features which we have already met with in the circumcision school, or in the mourning customs. At first sight there seems to be no relation whatever between the moving of a village, the initiation of boys and the

mourning over the dead. The inner connexion existing between these three events is that, in all of them, there is a passage. Hence the ressemblance of the rites. This striking similarity is, for me, the best proof that the passage rites form a peculiar category. When a headman has decided to move, he leaves his old kraal, he *separates* from it, not by the ordinary gate, but by a special opening made at the back of the village. He is not allowed to return to it any more. Then, for him and for all his people, begins a *marginal period* of one month or more, the buhlapfa (notice the prefix *bu* which indicates a period here, as in busahana, (page 40). We see, during these few weeks, the village put beyond the pale of society. The ordinary laws suspended (licencious songs), and many special taboos enforced (prohibition of sexual relations, fire taboo, water taboo, etc.), just as in the period of mourning ; at last the village comes back to the ordinary course of life by a final act of purification, the mysterious *hlamba ndjaka*, which seems to be the most powerful means of cleansing the collective life. This last ceremony shows that, here, the marginal period has been instituted on account of the uncleaness, impurity of the old village. Let us remember that in most cases the village has been moved on account of death ! All the adult members of the social organism take part in the cleansing (at least in the Northern clans) and so the village begins a new and purified life. No one can deny the deep significance of all these rites and the mystic conception of the Thonga village.

C. THE HEADMAN AND THE ORGANISATION OF THE VILLAGE

Each village thus possesses its superior (hosi), its master. He is called *mununzane* or *numzane*, a curious expression which is also employed in Zulu ; it means owner of a kraal, gentleman, and is often used in saluting grown up men. We have seen the mystic relation between the headman and his *muti*. The village, the muti, is the primitive social organism. The clan (tiko), which is the gathering of all the *miti*, reproduces all the features of the village life on a large scale. So the *numzane* corresponds to the *hosi*, chief of the tribe. Both certainly possess

great authority, but it must not become tyrannical. They must govern for the benefit of their subordinates.

This peculiar position of the numzane amongst his people is illustrated, in a striking way, by the laws of distribution of the joints of meat on the day when the headman kills an ox to feast them. The various portions must be distributed to the relatives according to the place which they occupy in the family. The headman, nominal proprietor of the ox, will keep the breast (shifuba). This is not only the sternum and the ribs, but most of the viscera which are contained in them. The tripe, the heart, the kidneys will be put all together inside the stomach, and constitute what is called *nkopfu wa homu*. The headman will probably send the heart and the kidneys to his wives (tinkosi-kazi, his queens!). The brother who comes next will receive one of the hindlegs. The third in rank one of the forelegs. The elder son will eat the second hindleg, and the younger son the second foreleg. They will eat this meat with their families, or houses (tiyindlu). This custom is very old. (1)

Let us continue the distribution. To the brothers-in-law, or to the relatives-in-law generally, the tail is sent. It is the portion of the sister. But this does not only consist of the tail properly speaking; it comprises all the hind parts of the animal, especially the rump (kondjo). The malume (maternal uncle) receives part of the loins (muhlubula). The liver is put aside for the grandfather and the old people generally, because it is soft and they have no teeth to gnaw the bones. The head belongs to all

(1) This custom is illustrated in a very interesting manner by the relative position of the three clans occupying the South of the Bay. They all are descended from Tembe (See page 23). *Tembe*, the ancestor, representing the elder branch of the royal family, ate the chest. He was the superior (hosi), and this rank is still held by his descendants in the direct line. *Sabi* or Mpanyele, the second brother, or son of the second brother, ate the hindleg ; he was established later on in the Mathuthweni district, between Tembe and Maputju. *Maputju*, the younger brother, head of the third branch, ate the foreleg. But he revolted against his elder brother and carved out for himself a kingdom which very soon became stronger than those of Tembe and Mathuthweni. Mathuthweni became more or less independant. But when people want to remind the Maputju people of their inferior origin, they say to them : " Tembe ate the breast, Sabi the hindleg and Maputju the foreleg ! "

the men of the village who must eat it on the hubo, as we have seen. They may give the tongue (ndjaka) to the old men. It is taboo for the women to eat it, or the under lip (See p. 185). From each limb a small piece is taken away (tshumbuta) and placed on a skewer; it is the portion of the shepherds and of the butchers, (makotjo ya babyisi). (See the tale of Piti, *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 152). Sometimes the shepherds also receive the lungs and the spleen.

This way of distributing ox meat is called " ku tlhaba homu ba hamba milao ", viz., " to kill an ox according to rule ". Should a younger brother or a son kill an ox, he will send the breast to the master of the village, but he keeps all the limbs and does not observe the rules because, as he says: " It is enough to pay taxes to the chief of the country ". Often one of the legs is sent to the chief of the clan.

Strange to say when a goat is killed none of these prescribed rules are followed as they only concern the oxen.

These customs show clearly the position of the headman: he is the master, but also the father of his subordinates, and their provider.

1) He must *watch* over the village (basopa, Dutch word passop, universally adopted by the natives). During the night, if his son is away working in Johannesburg, he takes care that no lovers come into the huts of his daughters-in-law, (a langusa bumbuye), and if he happens to catch one, he will make him pay the fine.

2) He is a true *justice of peace* amongst the inmates of the village, doing his best to maintain good relations amongst them. Suppose for instance that the pigs belonging to one of the inhabitants come out of their enclosure and spoil the gardens of another man. This man will go and say to the owner of the pigs: "Such and such a thing has happened, please close the pig's kraal more carefully". Should the same thing happen a second time, he will complain to the *numzane*. The headman will then go to the culprit and say: " You have not taken notice of the warning; you must pay compensation (djiha)". If the culprit listens to the "voice of the blood" (bushaka), he will

obey and the matter will end smoothly; if not, the headman can only keep silent : he has no soldiers, no means of enforcing his judgment; the plaintiff will then go to the chief of the tribe to complain. The case will be judged before the Court, in the capital, because the offender has refused to follow the way of persuasion, he has "mocked the family love" (a yalile bushaka). Such misdemeanours are very frequent in the life of the village. Most of the natives bear philosophically with these annoyances. Should, however, some one be truly wicked, and weary the patience (wa ku karata), he will be forced to build a hut for himself, alone, outside the village. If the damage is done by *children*, if they have stolen sweet potatoes, as we have seen, the wronged proprietor gives them a good thrashing but does not claim a fine. Occasionally the headman himself thrashes them in presence of their own father, and the father will say to them : "You see the numzane will beat you if you are not good". Children who mock cripples are also severely beaten by him, all the more so as, in this case, the offended one has the right of claiming a fine.

3) The headman also possesses *the authority over his younger brothers and his children*. He can even confiscate their money if one of them be addicted to drinking and ruin his property. However his authority in this respect must not be overstepped, and the headman must take care how he exercises it, as it is based more or less on sufferance. The younger brothers, for instance, maintain the right of making contracts, especially lobola contracts. Should the numzane restrict their liberty too much, they will leave him and found their own villages. A successful headman is he who knows how to keep the whole family together to the general satisfaction.

4) The headman has also the right of imposing *statute labour*, especially when the oxen kraal must be rebuilt, or when the weeds must be removed from the hubo; he sends his young men to do the work. But he must not exact too much from his people or forget to feast them, with beer or with meat when the work is finished.

5) Lastly the headman *presides over all the discussions* which take

place in the village. He is the master of the hubo. The discussion can be conducted in three different places: when it deals with a secret matter, the men go *inside the hut*: they debate the matter indoors (ba bulabula ndlwen). The private questions affecting the life of the village are generally settled there. Questions discussed with strangers and those regarding which there is no secrecy, and in which everybody can take part, are discussed *on the central square*, on the "hubo". *Hubo* means the square and also the council of men of the village which the headman summons there to settle matters (ku khanela timhaka). Should they be able to come to an agreement together or with their visitors who have come to bring a claim, the matter is "cut" (ba tjema mhaka), viz., "ended". In the opposite case, when they disagree altogether, the question will be carried to a third place, before the *hubo of the chief*, at the capital. (See Part III).

Everybody is welcome to take part in the discussions except women. As a rule men speak as little as possible with women on these matters. If a husband has a sensible, discreet wife, he may ask her advice. But if he has agreed with his companions on a point and changes his mind after having spoken with his wife, he will be severelly blamed and accused of "spoiling the village" (hona muti).

The headman is more or less *responsible for all the claims* lodged against his subordinates. Should one of his younger brothers be prosecuted for a debt, the creditors will go to the numzane and he cannot say: "This matter does not concern me". He will say to his brother: "Pay your debt", and, if the brother has no funds, he will help him, if possible, but it is only a loan, and the younger brother will pay back the money. As a rule members of the same family help each other in these matters. It is so much the custom that children are expected to pay the debts of their deceased parents, even if they have not inherited anything from them. However this does not come from a moral sense of family dignity. They do it because the native authorities hold them responsible. They might be "arrested". In the case of a father who has died still

owing some lobola money, the children will try to pay, but they will do it in order to obtain possession of the woman. Should a father have committed adultery with a married woman, and die without having paid the fine, his heirs are not considered responsible. On the other hand, if the father has been condemned as a wizard by the chief, and dies, his heirs must pay the compensation claimed. All these rules clearly illustrate the communism of family life and family property, under the supervision of the headman.

Should a numzane be absolutely unable to govern his village, *the family council can depose him* and put another man in his place. This council will be formed of old relatives, especially the paternal uncles to whom the younger brothers will go and complain of the misbehaviour of their headman. A younger brother will then be proclaimed and the elder will be despised. They will say: "Hi singe! A fahla muti, a hluli hi muti"! "He is a fool! He breaks the village; he is overcome by the village", viz., not able to keep up his position.

As regards the *law of succession* to the headmanship, the second brother takes the place of the elder one, and so on. The son of the elder cannot become headman before all his paternal uncles are dead. We shall find this principle also followed in the succession of the chiefs. (Part III).

D. THE DAILY LIFE IN THE VILLAGE

From the oxen kraal to the huts, from the square to the little wood, through the doors and in the reed yards, black forms are going to and fro. Everybody seems busy. There is talking, laughing, playing and working. The expression "working like a nigger" is hardly applicable, for they do not kill themselves with work. It would, however, be quite as much a mistake to believe that the natives spend all their time in loafing about. Far from it!

I. *Women's occupations.*

Women, chiefly, are very busy. When the sun rises, they come out of their huts, wash their faces, and light a little fire

Phot. H. Gros

Spelonken women preparing the evening meal after their return from the fields.

to warm the mealie pap which was left from the evening meal. In a small pot, they prepare a new sauce of monkey nuts to season it. The family takes its *morning meal* (fihlula); then, if it is the time of tillage, *they go to the fields*, the hoe on the shoulder, the shirundju (conic basket) on the head, and sometimes the baby on the back. The whole morning they will dig up sweet potatoes, grub up their future plantation, or weed their mealies. In the heat of day they come back in order to prepare the evening meal. Sometimes, if the gardens are far away, or when they are employed in scaring the birds from their sor-

ghum plantation, they remain the whole day in their fields, cook their evening food there, bringing it back quite hot to the village at sunset. (1)

Many other home duties may oblige the woman to leave the fields at noon : her head always laden with her basket, she may go to the swamps, near by, and dig out a provision of black clay (bompfi). She comes back, mixes it with the fresh dung which she has taken from the oxen kraal, and, spreading this mixture with her hands, she will smear the floor of the hut. This work is called *sindja* (Ro) or *kopola* (Dj.). Dust and vermin will disappear at once under this plaster of black earth, which will dry in a few hours time. Woe to the woman who has not put enough dung in this novel kind of cement ! The floor will crack ! The clay will shrivel and, when people walk on it, it will crumble into dust ! The work will have to be done over again two or three days later ! But if the clay is of good quality, it will harden and last at least one week, the more so as neither wooden shoes nor nailed boots will spoil it !

Another woman will go with her primitive axe in search of dead wood. She makes a bundle of it which she ties with grasses and she strengthens these grasses by entwining them with small twigs. (2) On returning to the village, she throws her burden on the ground, before the door of her hut, with the exclamation : "Hu !"

Some others go to their storehouses, those small huts on poles, where mealies, monkey nuts in their husks, millet and sorghum are kept. They take what they need from these stores (tshaha) by lifting up the roof of the little hut, come back and empty the mealies in to the mortar, whilst a friend rubs off the grains from the ears of millet or shells the monkey nuts. Two or

(1) I have seen a Rikatla woman coming home under similar conditions, carrying her child on her shoulders and the burning monkey-nut sauce in the shihundju on her head. Her foot caught in a root. She tottered : the pot fell on the baby who was scalded to death.

(2) Men, when they fasten a bundle with a string, make a knot (ba fundju) whilst women twist with a little stick (sulela hi linhi) ; when a woman ties a knot, the two ends of the string will be at right angles to the string, whilst when a man makes it, the ends will be parallel with it. (Mboza).

three women seize their pestles and begin to pound, in measured time, the bottom of their mortars: Gu-gu-gu-gu. Quite far away, on the other side of the copse, this pestle song is heard similar to that of the flails when the corn is threshed in the barn. And the busy women stream with perspiration ! This method of crushing the mealies in an erect position, by a vigorous uplifting and down bearing of the pestle in the mortar, is a very healthy one and gives to the Thonga women a straight and slender figure. In the tribes where the millet is mostly ground between stones, women who do this work kneeling are shorter and stouter.

Phot. A. de Meuron.

Shiluvane girls returning from the well.

Before putting the mealies on the fire, women go down to the village well, their round pitchers on their heads, to fetch the water they need. In the Ronga country these wells are simple holes dug in the sand, in the centre of the hollows. (1) Wells are generally surrounded by thorny branches so as to prevent the cattle from coming to drink and fouling the water. It must be noticed that it is not a spring which feeds the well; it is the underground layer of water which has been reached, and which always maintains the same level except in times of drought.

The sun goes down on the horizon. The long shadows of the trees round the village lengthen on the square. Through the leaves, a few rays of sun still reach the fireplaces and pass

(1) In the Transvaal, where there are rivers, water is taken from them, or from wells dug near the spruit into which the water leaks through the soil, being more or less filtered by this process.

through the smoke which rises peacefully from the various kitchens. Between broken pots, or between the pieces of termitine clay which constitute the hearth on which the pots rest, the women place some pieces of dead wood and, when these burn away in the centre, they push them further under the pot while the flour is cooking (ba hlanganyeta ndjilo). Evening has come. The men are there. With a large spoon (nkombe) the lady of the house places the food (phamela) on plates of the size of small basins or dishes (mbenga). We have seen how she distributes it amongst the inhabitants of the village. When all have finished eating, women wash the plates, put aside the pots which contain the food left for the next morning, and tidy up the yards.

Whatever one may say, the day has been a well-filled one for the women. They are very rarely seen playing in day time. We shall see how they recuperate themselves in the evening.

II. *Men's occupations.*

As for the men, their life is far from being as active as that of the women. They have not, like their diligent wives, the regular continuous work of preparing the food, without mentioning the care of the children. The duties which fall on them, and which they are willing to perform, only require of them isolated efforts from time to time.

As regards *agricultural work*, it is generally believed that men leave this entirely to the women. This is exaggerated. Amongst the Ronga each man possesses his own field which he himself tills, and this is an old custom, a special term being even applied to the field thus tilled : it is called mpashu. He may sow seeds in it, but he does not weed it, leaving his wife to do this troublesome work for him and also to reap it. He makes only one exception in the case of the sorghum, consenting to go and cut its ears. But he helps his wife in other ways, for instance in the conservation of the food : he

builds the little huts used as storehouses, prepares the *tjala*, viz., the mat stretched on four poles on which ground nuts are dried in the field, digs holes for the *bukiri*, the shelf at the back of the hut where the basket containing the seeds is placed. His wife does not think him a lazy fellow at all. When the harvest is finished, she takes the smaller cobs of mealies (makunhula), those which will not be kept, or the grains of millet and sorghum which are found on the threshing floor after the threshing, and with them she prepares a special beer to thank (tlangela) her husband for his kind help! This is the way of notifying to him that all the grain has been harvested, as, whatever the collaboration of the man may have been, the mealies belong to him.

The main work of the man is the *building and repairing of the huts*. This is truly an arduous job, but is not of yearly recurrence. Every third or fourth year, they have to re-thatch the roof. The huts are built and repaired during the winter, from May to September.

A second domain, which is exclusively man's, is the *care of the cattle ;* the boys milk the cows, construct and repair the kraal : the little boys herd the goats, and the young men the oxen, as has already been mentioned.

It is also the men who *make all the utensils and tools* used in the village, pots and other crockery excepted; mortars, pestles, handles for axes or hoes (mimphinyi), wooden platters, carved or forged articles, all this work pertains to them. They must also make the *ntehe* for their wives, or sisters, after the birth of the babies. This is probably the explanation of the curious fact noticed amongst native Christians, namely that they are much more clever at needlework than their wives. Big fellows are often seen forsaking the hoe to work with the needle, and there are fathers who make their own clothing as well as the dresses for their wives and children!

Hunting and fishing are, of course, also men's work... or pastime. For some of them hunting is a true trade, at least such was the case in former times, before the White Governments placed strict regulations and levied heavy licences on that

sport. We shall study, in Part IV, the curious customs relating to these two favourite occupations of the natives.

A great part of their time is devoted by the men to *paying visits*. They are very fond of calling on each other, and sometimes they go great distances to see relatives or friends. They do not travel to pay visits only, but they frequently journey to claim payment of their debts (milandju). To regain the possession of a miserable head of cattle they willingly lose whole weeks! And what endless discussions in the *hubo*, when an unfortunate visitor comes to ask for his property! What cunning displayed in confusing the real issue and evading payment! (1)

The *discussion of the affairs* (ku khanela timhaka) on the square of the village fills also many an hour in a man's life.

So, on the whole, men have but little to do. One can justly estimate at three months the time required for the work which they have to do for the village and for the community. The remaining months are devoted to pastimes and pleasure.

III. *Games of adults.*

Having already described boys' and girls' games (p. 65 and 173), I now proceed to those of the adults, as forming an important part of the Life of the Village.

1) Men's favourite pastime in South Africa is *drinking beer*.

(1) One day one of my neighbours, named Mandjia, was arranging to start for Bilene to " follow his goods " (landja bukosi); he came and requested me to give him a letter. " What for? Your debtors do not know how to read and I do not know anything about your affairs." — " It does not matter ", said he. The important point is that I should have a paper in hand. They will be afraid. They will think that I come from the White people with their authority." I did not like to refuse a small favour to a neighbour; on the other hand I was somwhat reluctant to help him in a not too moral plan, so I gave him a letter addressed to the Portugese Intendant of these countries in which I stated that I knew him. It was a kind of pass .. What use did he make of it? The fact is that he came back with his oxen and I believe the sight of the mysterious paper was not without influence in the transactions which ended in the recovery of his property!

There are no bars on the velt... But every village is from time to time a brewery and a drinking place. Beer is prepared in large quantities. As we shall see, the brewing lasts about nine days. Near Lourenço Marques, natives fill not only pots but big casks with it! One of the jugs is put aside for the

Phot. A. Borel.

Beer-drinking party in Maputju country.

headman to try it. He must pour a little of it into the *gandjelo :* this religious act is obligatory. Next day the men of the village assemble in the morning to sample it also, and, at noon, all the friends from the neigbouring villages arrive. Everybody is welcome. Even a leper can take part in the beer-drinking ; but he will come with his own calabash and they will fill it with a special ladle. As a rule near neighbours also bring their calabashes, but people coming from afar are not expected to do so. The beer is drunk with great haste. Before it is all finished, the numzane puts aside a pot for his father-in-law, his uterine nephew, and the friend who invited him on a previous occasion... Of course after having filled their stomachs, men

and women dance on the hubo in the afternoon, and especially in the evening, when the moon shines : the shouting sometimes becomes dreadful when drunkenness has smothered all musical instincts. Some days later, another headman invites his neighbours to another beer-drinking, and so people eat and drink together (ba delana, ba nwelana) as long as there is plenty in the storehouses. When provisions become scarce, one begins to spare the mealies. But the advantage of the polygamist comes to the fore here : his storehouses are many and he can feast his friends for many months.

These beer-drinking customs are essentially demoralising ; they are one of the curses of primitive native life. But let us remark that, as the making of the beer takes nine days, these excesses can not be very frequent, and the habit of drinking wine at the White man's store is ten times more harmful, as, in this case alcohol is never wanting. We shall speak later on of alcoholism amongst natives. (See Part IV).

Another pastime, very much appreciated by some, but not so general, is *hemp smoking* and the accompanying *saliva fight*. Hemp (mbange) has been cultivated for a considerable time amongst the Thonga, especially on the coast, not to make ropes, but for smoking. The date of its introduction and its origin are unknown. The pipe used for smoking it is made of a reed (lihlanga) with a small pierced wooden or stone ball (mbiza) fixed at its upper extremity. In the ball the hemp is placed and lit. The lower extremity of the reed is introduced into a horn half filled with water. The reed soaks in this water. With one hand, the smoker closes the horn and leaves only a narrow opening through which he sucks vigorously so as to form a vacuum. The smoke is thus drawn through the reed and the water into the mouth of the smoker. Its passage through the water cools it. Without this precaution the smoke would be too strong, stop the saliva, and make the man drunk at once. It is called *shingwandja*, when pure, and is not liked, whilst they say that, when it has gone through water, it has an agreeable taste. It makes the smoker cough terribly but they thoroughly enjoy this exercise. Moreover it excites an abundant saliva-

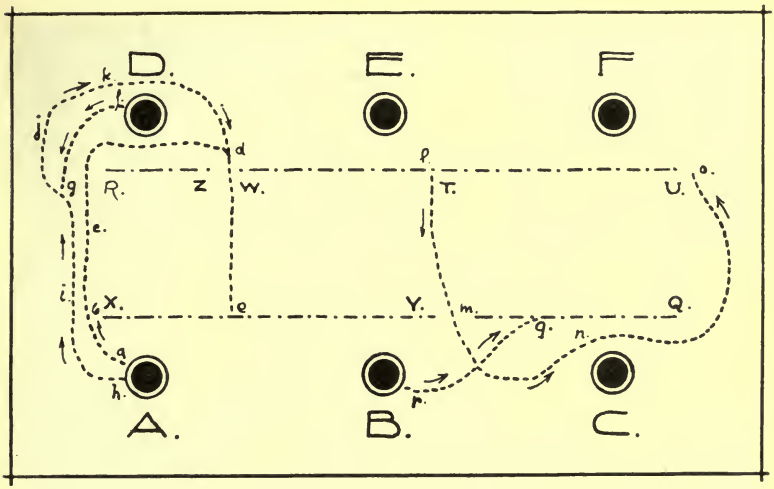
tion, which is the chief requisite for their favourite game. They take a hollow grass, called *shenga*, and begin to fight by blowing their saliva through it on the ground. The simplest form of the game consists in squirting as long streams of saliva as pos-

Phot. A. Borel.

Hemp-smoker.

sible. He who squirts the furthest, wins. But it sometimes is much more complicated. In the adjoining diagram the reader can follow the wonderful combinations of this game, called *ku tjhuma* or *hlazelana*. There are two sides, each with its pipe. Three men, A. B. C. oppose three others, D. E. F. First of all, each side protects itself by making a saliva fence, line X. Q. for the first side, R. U. for the second one. Unhappily for

D. E. F. the saliva dries up on the point Z. W. and so their fence is broken. A. takes his advantages. He begins to squirt out his saliva on the line *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*..., passes through the opening Z. W., and, having come back victoriously to *e*, he has destroyed all the fortifications R. Z. Suppose D. wants to protect himself. He tries to close the access to his position by drawing the line *f*, *g*. But, arrived in *g*, he comes to the end of his saliva (a helela), and A. who started in *h*, having arrived in *i*,



Drawn by J. Wavre.

Illustration of the saliva fight of hemp-smokers.

turns round the point *g*, where his enemy has miserably stopped, and, going on, *j*, *k*, reaches the opening *d* and triumphantly ends his campaign in *e* !

But E. of the opposite camp has noticed a gate in the barrier X. Q. The saliva has dried there. He quickly carries his blow-pipe across the battle field, squirting all the time, passes through the opening Y. He draws the line *l*, *m*, *n*, *o* and so destroys the part Q. Y. of the fortification X. Q. Should B. be quick enough, he might prevent him accomplishing his plan by drawing the line *p*. *q*... And so on ! Young men, even men of ripe age, take an immense delight in those saliva battles. But the saliva must be blackish... It must be *ntjutju* saliva, viz.,

saliva produced by hemp, and not the ordinary white saliva, called *matjáfula*. Should one of the players try to supplement the blackish by the white, he would be disqualified... His enemy would seize him by the forehead, force him to lift his head and to stop his attack. If he goes on, however, the other will say: "What ? You come to me with matjafula ! " This may lead to quarrels, even to blows... The hemp-pipe falls down and everything concludes in cordial laughter.

Phot. A. Borel.

Men playing tshuba near Rikatla.

This hemp-smoking custom becomes a passion for many young men. To cure them their parents break the pipe, take a little of the soot which is found inside, and mix it with his food without his being aware of it. When this has been done three times, it is said to fill him with disgust for hemp... Similia similibus curantur... We shall often meet with this medical principle in the Thonga superstitions.

The most interesting game played by men, a game which fascinates them and which is certainly more refined than hemp-smoking, is the *tshuba*. It is at the same time one of the most

widespread games of mankind. Mr. Stewart Culin says, in the Report of the Smithsonian Institute for 1893 and 1894 that, it is played under the same name by the American Negroes, and that it is but a variety of the *mancala*, the national game of Africa, which is found in many other countries, Ceylon, Indo-China, Bombay, Java, Jerusalem, Liberia, Abyssinia, Cairo, Gabon, Angola and amongst the Central African tribes. From the ethnographic point of view and for purposes of comparison it is, therefore, very interesting to note its rules all over the world. I tried (and I think, I succeeded), to discover those of the Thonga, which at first seemed to me incomprehensible. The adjoining illustration will help to explain them. The apparatus required is most simple. Let us imagine it played under its most elementary form, when two men only are engaged in it. Each of them digs two rows of four little holes, behind which he squats. They face each other. So there will be sixteen holes, eight belonging to *A* and eight to *B*. In each hole they put two stones, either real stones or fruit stones. Those of the kanye fruit are mostly used, but, by preference, native play with the nice grey shining seeds of a shrub found near the sea, and which resemble the marbles used by European boys.

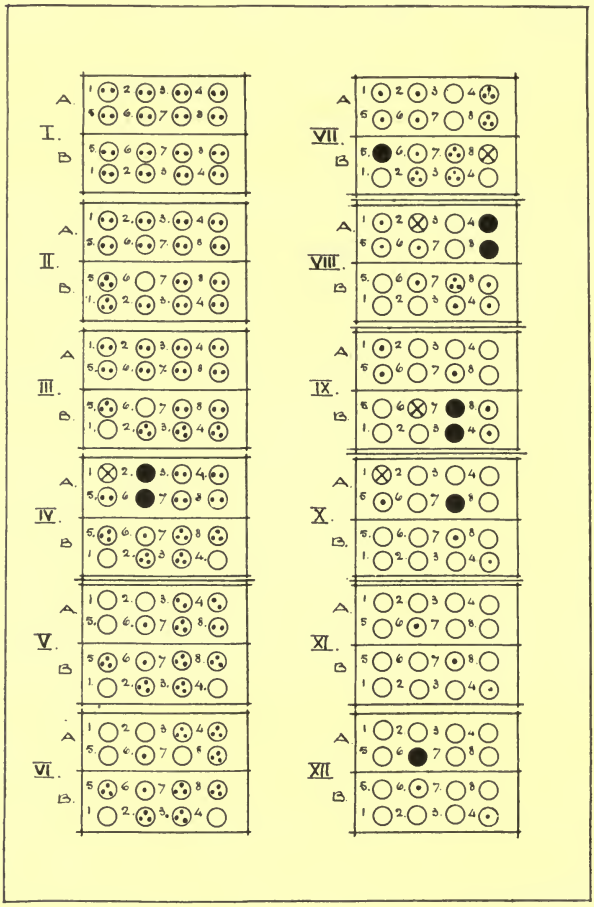
N° I shows two players ready to commence, with the sixteen holes filled. *A* must always follow the course 4, 3, 2, 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and *B* 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 7, 6, 5.

II. *B* starts. He takes the two stones out of hole 6 and puts one in 5, one in 1.

III. He goes on taking the stones out of one hole and putting always, one at a time, in the following holes, till his last stone reaches an empty hole. So he chooses three which are in 1 and puts them, one in 2, one in 3, one in 4.

IV. He chooses the three which are in hole 4 and distributes them in 8, 7, 6. The last one having reached an empty hole, he has succeeded : he wins and takes the stones of *A* in holes 6 and 2, which are opposite the hole he has reached. This appropriation is called *ku tha*. Moreover he has the right to *kill* (dlaya) another hole by taking its contents. He chooses

hole 1. I represent the regular appropriation (winning) by a black dot, and the supplementary (killing) by a cross in the hole. Having *beaten* (ku ba, such is the technical word



Drawn by J. Wavre.

The tshuba game and its laws.

employed when a player has succeeded in taking his enemy's stones), he stops and *A* starts.

V. A starts from hole 5, takes the two stones, puts one in 6, one in 7.

VI. He takes the three stones in 7 and distributes them in 8, 4 & 3.

VII. He takes the three stones of 3 and puts them in 2, 1, 5 : "A bile!"—"He has beaten". He wins the three stones of hole 5 of *B*, opposite hole 5 which he has reached. Moreover he takes and "kills" the three which are in hole 8.

VIII. *B* takes his turn. He starts from 2 and reaches with his last stone 8: "A bile": 8 was empty. So he picks up the three stones in his enemy's hole 8 and the three in hole 4. He kills moreover the single stone in 2.

IX. *A* who has now only three stones left, one in 1, one in 5 one in 6, starts from 6, puts his single stone in 7 and picks up those of holes 7 and 3 of *B*. He moreover "kills" 6.

X. *B* moves his stone from 8 to hole 7 ; he picks up 7 and in addition he "kills" 1 !

XI. *A* starts with his last stone from 5 to 6. But there is nothing opposite to him, nothing to pick up, nothing to kill!

XII. *B* moves from 7 to 6. He picks up the last stone of *A* who is thus beaten (a mphile). He has vanquished him! (A mu mphyinshile !)

The rules are clear enough and this game does not seem to be very difficult. It is, on the contrary, very complicated, and I do not wonder why men sometimes spend half the day, stooping down on the ground, talking with animation and sometimes fighting when they think one of them has transgressed the rules.

When the tshuba has only four holes in a row, it is called *shimunana* (from *mune*, four) and is not very exciting. But it can also be played with 8, 10, 16, even 22 holes, and then it becomes very complicated. Six holes will not do (a psi thi), because successful combinations are impossible. I have also learned the tshuba of 16 holes. Let us suppose our two players *A* & *B* ; we number their 16 holes from left to right, the outer and inner rows bearing the same numbers. *A* will start from hole 12 outer row, and will follow the prescribed course all round his holes, going from left to right, until he comes back successfully to the same hole. He will,

shout: "tsheun!", imitating the noise of a gun, and pick up his enemy's stone in holes 12 of the outer and inner row, and "kill" in *B*'s outer row holes 15 & 13. *B* will start from hole 14 of the inner row and reach 12 of the same row. He picks up the stones in the two holes 12 of *A* and "kills" hole 3 in the outer row, etc. etc... Hours will sometimes elapse before one player has beaten the other.

A single stone in a hole is called *tshonga*. Two stones are called *mbiri*. If the following holes are empty, and if these stones cannot lead the players further, *mbiri* takes the name of *mpalati*. It is bad luck! (Compare N° IX, on the drawing.) When you arrive with your last stone opposite two holes full, and consequently pick up 4, 5, 6 stones at a time, it is luck! It is *malu*. When only one hole is occupied and you win only one or two stones, it is *muhaha*. You have beaten in a "muhaha". (U bile muhahen). When you do not reach the place you wanted, not having had enough stones, you are said "to sleep on the road". When you start, full of courage, hoping to succeed, you say: I go to kill meat" (ndji ya dlaya nyama), and this word shows that the game represents two hunting parties. But it evidently also represents a fight as do most of the games; thence the cries of triumph which accompany it. When one of the players happens to empty two holes with three stones in each, he says: "The fight is hot! (sha lwa). I have captured warriors!" If they contain but one stone, a poor *tshonga*, he says: "I have only caught women!"

Fighting and hunting are great sports for natives. Hence the popularity of the tshuba game. It has become such a passion with the men that they neglect all their duties to indulge in it, and it has been necessary, in certain Christian villages, to prohibit the tshuba altogether, as the whole male population was abandoning their work for the game!

The *evening games* are happily not so dangerous for the moral well-being of the village. Women who have worked the whole day now take their innings. This is the *tha* par excellence, the most refined amusement, the story telling. It takes place at eventide. It is taboo to *tha* in the middle of the day. Those

who would transgress the law would become bald (!), and persons affected with calvities are commonly and jocosely accused of having told tales at midday. So, when the moon shines, when all the work of the day is ended, all the inhabitants assemble at one of the firesides to amuse themselves. They rarely gather together on the hubo for that purpose, as the square is reserved for the discussion of matters of importance or for dances. The rejoicings at first consist in a parlour game, which is also known amongst Europeans, the *guessing the charcoal piece (mhumhana)*. Two sides are formed opposite each other, women on one side, men on the other. One of the women, holding a piece of charcoal, puts it into the hands of one of the other partners, saying: "Dana, u shura nwanaaaa'nga", (eat and be satisfied, my child). Then both present their closed hands to the other side saying: "Mhumha!" The man opposite must guess in which hand the charcoal is hidden. He flips one of the four hands with his finger saying: "Give me! Here it is!" If he has guessed rightly, he has won, and then proceeds in his turn to hide the charcoal in the hand of one his own side. When they have had enough of this game and wish to finish it in the proper manner, *they pull their fingers* and make them crack *(ku ba tindjwati)*. Each of them pulls a finger in turn. The first who is unable to produce a sound is expelled from his side. Then those who have been beaten make faces, as ugly or funny as they can, at their victors; these must keep serious and not laugh. Should they not be able to keep their faces, their victory is lost!

But these games are only a preliminary. The farther we go, the nearer we get to true literature! Now they ask each other *riddles (psitekatekisa)*, simple ones and antiphonic ones. We shall study this form of folklore later on... If the second side is unable to give the right answer to the riddle, it asks permission to propose one in its turn and so the intellectual fighting goes on until they have exhausted the series of riddles they know. Those who have had the worst of the duel must pay the forfeit by *telling tales (tha psihetana)*. A woman might be present who is a renowned story teller and she keeps the whole company under

the charm of her tale for half an hour, perhaps longer.... Children shiver when hearing the terrible story of the bogey man! They burst into laughter when she describes the funny tricks of the Hare, or of the frog *Shinana*. They approve heartily when the younger brother, despised by his elders, becomes their saviour and teaches them a good lesson... The Thonga lore is very rich. It is one of the most interesting manifestations of the psychic life of the tribe. We shall study it with the attention it deserves in Part V of this work. Here it suffices to show what a great and happy part it plays in the life of the village.

E. RULES OF POLITENESS AND HOSPITALITY

The village life is dominated by the *respect for hierarchy*. I do not think this term to be exaggerated. Etymologically hierarchy conveys not only a moral but a religious idea. This religious feeling is not absent in the fear felt by a younger brother for his elder, because the elder member of the family is its priest, its only possible intermediary between this family and its gods (See Part VI). So no wonder if, in their mutual relations, though these are extremely free and natural, natives follow strict rules of etiquette.

In *addressing* an elder person, it is not becoming to call him by his name. You will say to him : "Tatana", father, or "mamana", mother, as the case may be. Or you address him by the name of his father preceded by Nwa, if it is a man, Mi, if it is a woman. So Mboza was called Nwamasuluke, and Nsabula Migogwe. You may also say to a counsellor : "Nduna", to the chief: "Hosi", to the headman : "Numzana", to any grown-up man : "Wa-ka-Manyana", viz., man of such a clan, or descendant of such a man. Even speaking of an adult, in the third person, you will not use his name but employ similar respectful expressions. After the birth of her first child, the mother is generally called after it, not so universally, however, as amongst the Ba-Suto. So Magugu, the wife of Spoon, became

Mamana wa Modjadju, especially when spoken of in the third person. The names which are the most taboo are those of the mother-in-law, and of the "woman bought with my oxen". Speaking of a deceased person, one puts before his name the expression "*Matjuwa*", which corresponds to our: "late".

The principle *salutations* are: "*Shawan*", — be saluted, said by the arriving guest, — to which you reply also: "*Shawan*"; "*Hamban*", good-bye or "*salan*", — remain, is said on leaving, — and you answer: "*Famban*, — go, or "*Famban kahle* (Zulu)", — go happily. Other greetings are employed only at certain times of the day: "*Avushen!*" a kind of locative, "at the dawn", equivalent to "good morning". (Vusha means dawn). "*Hi nhlekanhi*" — it is midday! "*A dji pelen*" or "*a dji hlwen*", — at sun set, properly — time when the sun sets. When retiring to sleep: "*Yetlelan* (Ro.)" — sleep! or "*sibaman* (Dj.)" — lie on your belly; or "*hi ta pfushana*", — we shall say to each other good morning to-morrow! A curious salutation addressed to people working is: "*A psi fen* (Ro.)", — let it die. Its origin is as follows: when a man had killed a large animal, a hippopotamus or an antelope, his companions used to salute him thus, hoping to share the meat with him. Now it is said to anybody working in the fields; it then means: "let your work die." The word "Nkosi", with which natives salute White men, means Chief in Zulu. They lift up the hand when pronouncing it. It is not as if they were trying to raise their hats, as they do not wear any. The explanation of the gesture is this, according to a Transvaal native: the Boers taught black people to point to heaven, when saluting a White man, with this meaning: "I compare you with the One who is above!"

In the Northern clans, salutations are generally accompanied with a clapping of hands (omba mandla). Men beat their hands against each other, putting them parallel to each other; women do the same, putting them crosswise or at right angles. Amongst the Ba-Pedi this salutation with the hands is performed in a somewhat different manner: when a Pedi enters the hubo, and wants to greet a gathering of men, he claps his hands before his breast; but when he salutes only one person, he

bows down and claps his hands at the height of his knees, either on the right side or on the left. Amongst the Ba-Ronga, clapping the hands is a sign of thankfulness ; they do it saying at the same time : " *I khani mambo* " which probably means : " I dance before you, Sir ". (" Mambo " means chief in the Djao language). In Djonga the proper word for thanking is *nkomo* The etymology of this word seems to be : " I homu ", " it is an ox." Should anyone give me a hen, he presents it to me saying : " Take my chick ". When he brings a goat he says : " This is my hen ". In both cases I answer : " Nkomo ", " it is an ox ! " The Thonga etiquette requires that the giver depreciate his gift and that the receiver magnify it ! Another less polite way of thanking is this : " *Yengetan !* ", — " do it again ", or " *ni mundjuku* ", — " and also to-morrow " !

Thonga used not to *shake hands* hands in former times. Nowadays the civilised natives have adopted the European fashion, but this kind of familiarity is not approved of by the old folks, especially by the chiefs. Natives, when they shake hands, often do it in two movements : first they catch the four fingers and then slide on to the thumb. I do not know where they have learnt to do this ! *Kissing* was formerly entirely unknown. A good mother would occasionally wipe her baby's nose, but this can hardly be called a kiss. When they saw the custom adopted by the Europeans, they said laughingly : " Look at these people ! They suck each other ! They eat each other's saliva and dirt ! " Even a husband never kissed his wife. When coming back from a journey, a man would hardly greet his wife ; she would see him passing through the village, prepare food for him, aud when it was cooked, she would come and salute him by presenting it to him.

Hospitality. When strangers enter a village men sit on the *bandla*, and women go further and sit on the *hubo ;* they remain quietly there till the people of the village come and salute them (losa). Should the inhabitants delay too long, the passers-by move on, saying : " These people are not good. " But this is very rare. Generally the master of the village comes to them, inquiring who they are, whence they come,

where they are going, and asks them : " Do you wish to spend the night here ? " If they say : " Yes ", the headman will empty one of his huts by putting two of his wives together, and will himself sleep with the visitors. Should there still be food, he will give them some. If not, he says : " *Ndlala !* " " Starvation ! " After a little while, a mat is unrolled and the official ceremony of " djungulisana " takes place. This is a very amusing custom. The headman sits together with his hosts and enquires about the news of their home. One of the visitors begins in a monotonous tone and emits with volubility a flow of words with a peculiar cadency and almost without taking breath. His interlocutor interrupts him after each sentence, with " Ahina, hina, " that is to say " Indeed, indeed ! " till the whole skein is unwound ; the two men finish with a longer " *Hina* ", the inhabitants of the hut adding an emphatic " *khani* ", a heartfelt " thank you " ; then the master of the village begins to relate in the same tone his own news. One cannot imagine anything more curious than this " mélopée " in two parts.

This law of hospitality is general all over the tribe ; nowadays, however, customs begin to change ; hundreds of young men (magaisa) coming from the towns, having worked there, pass through the country, and it would be impossible to put them up and feed them all. They sleep on the *bandla* and cook food for themselves, occasionally buying some mealies or a hen from the inhabitants. Moreover they have plenty of money and they can pay !

It must also be added that, if they dispense hospitality liberally, the Thonga can be very hard on people who do not belong to their special clan. Feelings of humanity are sometimes strangely deficient. I heard of a boy of the Manyisa district who had fallen down near the lake of Rikatla, unable to proceed further on account of a bad wound received while working at the Railway at Lourenço Marques. Nobody took pity on him, because he was of another clan and he would have died there if a Christian woman, named Lois, had not received him in her village and nursed him. Fear of death and its contamination can partly explain this want of compassion for strangers.

As already mentioned, it was taboo formerly to enter the village square, wearing boots. These boots consist in sandals made by the hunters for their long trips through the thorny bush. They were not allowed on the hubo. A subject was not permitted to sit on a mortar or on anything else : the chief alone could do so, and it was considered a sign of pride to sit on anything but the bare ground !

The habit of offering a concubine to passers-by is never met with amongst the Ronga as it is in other tribes. Nowadays dissolute women may offer themselves. But they have learnt rom White men this new kind of immorality.

F. THE FATE OF THE THONGA VILLAGE

What will be the fate of the little Bantu community, of the circular kraal of huts, well shut in behind its fence, under the shade of its symbolical tree, well " tied " under the absolute authority of the headman ? If we look at the new native settlements, at the modern native villages, built under the influence of civilisation and Christianity, we shall be struck at once by the fact that they are arranged in regular streets. (1) This change is momentous and highly significative. The new Thonga village is no longer a well defined family. It has become an agglomeration of families belonging to different clans, attracted to a particular spot by the European town or by the Church and the school. The straight line, with its capacity of infinite prolongation, has taken the place of the circular one with its forcedly restricted length. Considering that the new ideas are now invading the Bantu tribe from all parts, it is certain that the old circle will disappear more and more and that the regular streets will be more generally adopted.

From the point of view of the picturesque, it is a great pity. For the Ethnographer, the circle of huts, this curious Bantu commune with its striking laws, was ten times more interesting than the vulgar street of square houses or of galvanised iron sheds, which are a poor

(1) In many Bantu tribes, those of Central Africa, even in the Ba-Chopi tribe, on the South-Eastern boundary of the Thonga country, the natives already have straight streets. Is this plan original or not ? I suppose nobody can say. For the Thonga, Zulu and Suto kraals, at any rate, the circular arrangement is a characteristic feature.

imitation of European dwellings. However, from the practical point of view, this change is unavoidable. It even undoubtedly means progress.

The *native hut* is nicely shaped. I prefer the Thonga form, a circular wall on which a conical roof is placed, to the Zulu one, a beehive resting on the ground, or even to the Kaffir one which combines the features of both, having also a circular wall but with a cupola roof.

Phot. H. A. Junod.

Christian village of Shiluvane.

The conical roof is a better protection again the rain. But all these forms of dwelling have one great fault: they are not healthy. The rays of the sun cannot penetrate into the hut, and, though the top of the reeds is sometimes not plastered and allows a certain amount of ventilation, the air cannot circulate, because the hut has no window. Smoke must make its way through the thatch and it is very difficult indeed to obtain any current of air inside. Should a new type of hut be adopted, with high walls, goodsized doors and windows, a roof slightly overhanging the wall, these faults would be corrected. But civilised natives have not tried to follow this plan. They have at once copied the European system, the same as with their clothing! How

often we have longed to see them adopt some peculiar costume appropriate to the climate and to their occupations! But when they cast off their belt of tails, it is to put on long trousers, and they all dream of a complete khakhi or serge suit! So they will build square houses and this certainly has its advantages : the dwelling can be divided into many rooms and the different members of the family can all live under the same roof, which, from the educational point of view, is a good thing.

The *communism of food* is also a splendid feature and may fill with joy the most sanguine socialistic dreamers! But this custom has been severelly critised from the hygienic point of view. The habit of all plunging the fingers in the same plate, fosters tuberculosis and other contagious diseases ; but I do not think it is for this reason that the custom will die out. In the modern native settlement many different families live together. They are not united by any ties of blood. Moreover they are sometimes so numerous that such a communism would be pratically impossible. The golden age has passed for ever!

With it has also passed away the merry lazy life of the half naked *munumzane*. The coming of civilisation has already deeply changed his mode of living and the transformation will still accentuate itself more and more. I have heard Colonists cursing these black people who believe that they can escape the law of work under which Europeans groan : " these niggers who think that they will be allowed to remain incorrigibly lazy fellows for all time ! " I do not share this loudly expressed indignation. First the native *doda* is by no means an idle man. He has his own occupations for the benefit of the kraal. Secondly if his wants are few, and if he very soon reaches the happy state of a man who is not obliged to work, I see thousands of Europeans who enjoy the life of a "rentier" as much as he does, and without any qualms of conscience. A South African trader who works hard to make his fortune, and hopes to leave the country as quickly as possible, in order to enjoy all the comforts of a European town, theatres, concerts and clubs, has not, after all, a much loftier ideal than the native he curses... On the other hand, circumstances themselves enforce upon the native this law of working and teach him this " dignity of labour " of which we so often hear. A civilised native has increased his wants ten fold. He requires the wherewithal to satisfy them. This is the only legitimate, the most powerful incentive to work. Fifty, sixty thousand Thonga, the elite of our tribe, are constantly streaming to Johannesburg, where they are considered as

being the best mining boys. Many of them go there to earn lobola money. But they learn to spend money on other things and those who are converts to Christianity become regular purchasers of clothing, of better food, of books. The high taxation, to which they are subjected, also forces them to work. As long as it does not exceed a reasonable limit, and as long as the State causes the native community to benefit by the high sums taxed on it, it is all right, although this way of enforcing labour is not so normally healthy as the creation of new wants. Another powerful influence which tends to make men work more and to relieve women from the toil of tilling the field, is this : wishing to make money by selling grain, the Natives begin to clear larger fields than before, and we note with pleasure that they have adopted the use of the plough instead of the hoe in a great many quarters. The consequence of this change is that the men now do the work of preparing the fields. As women have nothing to do with the cattle and as ploughing is done with oxen, men now perform this difficult labour and they have to work hard. Is not this one splendid result of the spread of civilisation ? The fact cannot be denied that, as regards the mode of living and the distribution of work amongst men and women, a considerable change has already taken place and is being every day accentuated in the Thonga village. What is to be the ultimate result ?

When discussing the native problem, the most difficult of all the South African problems, politicians, missionaries, civilised natives and newspapers generally ask this question : " Must the native tribal life be preserved or, on the contrary, be destroyed " ? No clear, satisfactory, convincing reply has as yet been made. Tribal life is composed of two elements : the communal life and the national life, which ought to be considered separately. I am dealing here with the first of these elements only. The first remark I venture to make is that it is somewhat assuming on our part to believe that we can exert any very great influence on the solution of this question. Whatever one may hope, or fear, the evolution of the Bantu village, which began as soon as civilisation entered the land, will go on. It is not in the power of the Pope, of the Minister of Native Affairs, or of Superintendents of any large Missionary Societies, to prevent the transformation of the primitive patriarchal tribes, which is proceeding on as a matter of necessity. Human society evolves continually, and the economical and social changes, which have taken place in South Africa are so momentous that they will deeply affect and eventually completely

transform the Bantu community. But (this is my second remark) what we can strive at is to control, to guide this necessary evolution, and I should like to propose, to all those who can collaborate in the shaping of the future Bantu society, the two following suggestions :

1. Though the square house may supplant the round hut, though the hubo, the bandla and the absolute authority of the numzane may disappear, let us do our best to prevent the future native village from being a servile imitation of our own European settlements. The more the Natives remains original, the more will they be interesting and worthy to live. The "place of jealousy" will disappear together with polygamy. But let us retain all that is pleasing and moral in the picturesque circle of huts : the respect for elders, the sense of family unity, the habit of helping each other, the readiness to share food with others. Cannot these virtues be retained in the Christian village, under the direction of the missionary, or in the town location with its council of civilised natives ? On the other hand, in the closed circle, there was no place for strangers. The love and the interest was restricted to members of the family. In the new settlement we can hope to create a sense of wider humanity, more in harmony with the traditions of modern life.

2. The evolution of native society will certainly be accompanied with much suffering and it will not attain a satisfactory result, unless much patience is displayed by both Whites and Blacks. Let the conservative Natives and the dreamers of the past admit the necessity for these changes. Let the White men, who too often think that the black population has been created for the sole interest of the European, allow the transformation to come gradually and not unduly hasten it, in their eagerness to make of the Natives an asset for the country. I am convinced that a moral and religious teaching is of the utmost importance in order to spread this spirit of wisdom, of patience and good understanding, amongst the South African tribes. I hope that, in the future Bantu village the demoralising public house will never be allowed to develop the inordinate taste of the natives for alcohol. But, in the meantime, it is to be hoped that everywhere, amongst the buildings square and round, will be found the larger and more honoured edifices, the Church and the School, in which worship takes place and teaching is provided. The very existence of these races depends on these conditions.

THIRD PART

THE NATIONAL LIFE

After having sketched the Individual and the Communal life of the Thonga, we now consider the National life. We have seen what the *muti*, the Village, is for a Thonga. What is for him the Nation, *tiko* ? As we first pointed out, what we call nation, tiko, is not the big tribe, numbering many hundred thousand souls, but the special clan to which this Thonga belongs. There is no feeling of national unity in the tribe as a whole. Its unity consists only in a language and in certain customs which are common to all the clans. So the true national unit is the clan.

CHAPTER I

The clan

A. THE ACTUAL ORGANISATION OF THE CLAN

Whatever may have been the social system of the Bantu in past ages, the actual clan can be directly traced from the patriarchal family. I have particularly studied the composition of two of the Thonga clans, the Nkuna of Zoutpansberg and the Mazwaya of the estuary of the Nkomati. Let us see how the clan is composed in both these instances :

The *Nkuna clan*, which migrated from the confluence of the Oliphant and the Limpopo to the country round Leydsdorp, in

or about 1835, is certainly of purer descent than most of the other Thonga clans, owing precisely to its disturbed history, to its numerous migrations, which prevented other people from joining it, and strengthened the national tie. The common ancestor is Nkuna who, some centuries ago, left Zululand to settle in the plain of the Lower Limpopo. His son was Shitlhelana, his grandson Rinono. All the sons of Rinono are still known. One of them was the founder of the actual royal family and the present *hosi*, or chief, Muhlaba, descends from him. The descendants of the others, who call themselves after their names, are the Mhuntanyana, the Mashongana, the Mbhalati, the Kulala, the Mushwana, etc; they form what is called the *doors* (tinyangwa) of the clan, each of these districts being under a petty chief, who is *hosana* (diminutive of hosi). So the nation is but an enlarged family, and everybody depends on his *hosana* and his *hosi*, the members of the royal family alone having only a *hosi*.

In the *Nondwane country*, on either side of the estuary of the Nkomati river, the situation is somewhat different. The whole land was first occupied in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries by three independant clans, the Mahlangwan, Hoñwana and Nkumba, which were on a lower scale of civilisation, having no iron weapons nor oxhide shields. They were scattered as far as the Mabota country and their numbers must have been very few. A first invasion took place before 1500, when a chief of the Lebombo hills, called Lebombo, settled almost without fighting on the Western part of the estuary. It is the chief whom the old Portuguese chronicler Perestrello met in 1554, and who said to him : "Mena Lebombo," — "I am Lebombo." The original clans submitted to the invaders who mixed with them, being of a race not very different from them. Then, later on, came the actually reigning clan, the Mazwaya, which conquered the whole country. According to the custom generally followed, the Mazwaya chief placed his relatives and his sons in the various parts of the land as petty chiefs (tihosana), retaining the old Lebombo chiefs as counsellors (tinduna) to watch over them and to assist them. This is a wise way of proceeding : the old deposed chief becomes responsible for the welfare of the new one ! Thus many doors,

or provinces, were formed, and each of the petty chiefs founded a house and had his *shibongo,* his laudatory name. There were the Mazwaya Masinga, the main branch, near Morakwen ; the Mazwaya Tjakame, not far from them ; the Mazwaya Hlewane, Mazwaya Matinana, Mazwaya Makaneta, etc. As the complicated law of succession frequently leads to disorders, as we shall see, the main branch lost its paramount power and became secondary. The kingship passed to the Matinana branch. However the Masinga retained their authority in their own juridiction, and it would be taboo to place a member of a younger branch over them. The religious regard for hierarchical order prevents such an offence being committed. Lately, as a consequence of the war of 1904, the Hlewane branch has in its turn supplanted the Matinana one. Thus, from all these facts, it appears that two hundred years ago, the population of Nondwane was already composed of three different and successive layers. Since then, the situation has become even more complex. A great number of immigrants settled in the country during the last century, coming in groups and asking the Mazwaya chiefs and headmen to receive them. This is a very frequent occurrence amongst Thonga. They leave their clan, either because they want change, or because an accusation of witchcraft has induced them to flee, and they settle in another country. When I was living in Rikatla, one of the outside districts of the Mazwaya country, before the war of 1894, the hosana was Muzila, a young man of the reigning family ; but there were very few Mazwaya under him. He had as induna a Tembe man, called Mandjia, whose father, Mankhere, had come long ago to Rikatla and was so well known that people used to call the district : " Ka Mankhere ", " at Mankhere's. " Another village belonged to Hamunde, a Djonga from the Shiburi county. A third one, had been built by Manyisa people, Nwamangele being their headman. So the population of the estuary of the Nkomati, which, at that time, had reached the number of six to eight thousand souls, became very much mixed. However the country continued to be called : " At Mazwaya's ". It belongs to the Mazwaya clan. Such is the composition of most of the Thonga clans. Though

their origin is certainly the patriarchal family, they are far from being of pure descent.

'I am under the impression that this is the old, the normal political state of the Bantu : small tribes of some thousand souls with a tendency to breaking up, when they become too numerous, as happened in the cases of Tembe-Mapute and also with Mpfumo-Matjolo who were first united under Nhlaruti. (See p. 23). During the first half of the XIXth century, South Africa witnessed the birth of many great native kingdoms, in which a large number of tribes were amalgamated, thus forming much larger political units. This process began in the country now called Zululand, in 1800. There were then ninety-four different small tribes comparable with our Thonga clans, the Zulu one numbering only 2000 souls. They were amalgamated from 1818 to 1820, by the well-known military raids of Chaka, to such an extent that, in 1820, this terrible despot had more than 100 000 warriors and had added half a million people to his tribe, having deprived three hundred clans of their independance. Two Zulu generals followed the exemple of Chaka : Moselekatsi amalgamated the tribes of Mashonaland, and Manukosi the Thonga clans, without mentioning Songandaba and the Angoni of Nyassa. The same process was accomplished more or less peacefully, for the Bantu of Basutoland by Moshesh, for the Ba-Pedi by Sekukuni, so that the original state of autonomy of the South African clans was generally replaced by large kingdoms in the greater part of South Africa.

Was this development a natural evolution of the Bantu clan? I do not think so. We must not forget that the first idea of transforming the clan into a conquering army, the idea which inspired Chaka, was brought into Zululand by the Umtetwa chief Dingiswayo, and that he conceived it when seeing an English regiment in Cape Town. The military spirit of the Bantu, which might have remained quiescent for a few more centuries, was awakened or impregnated by this sight. The seed found a wonderfully well prepared soil, I confess. But without that seed, this terrible movement of amalgamation would

not probably have taken place, and I think we may consider the clan life, as it is still met with amongst the Ronga, (who were never subject to the Ngoni chief), as the typical Bantu political state. (1)

B. THE LAUDATORY NAME OF THE CLANS AND TOTEMISM

Each clan is known by the name of the old chief who is believed to have been its original ancestor. So the Nkuna clan came from Nkuna, who lived four or five hundred years ago, and left Zululand for the Bilen country. The Mazwaya clan descends from Mazwaya, grandfather of Masinga and ancestor of all the heads of the sub-clans, Makaneta, Hlewane, etc. This name is a kind of *family name* for all the members of the clan. In the course of time, when sub-clans begin to aspire to independency, the first ancestor tends to fall into oblivion and is supplanted by the ancestor of the sub-clan. This process is easily noticeable at the present moment in Nondwane, where Mboza, for instance, calls himself a Makaneta. He says: "I am wa ka Makaneta," — "a man of the Makaneta house"; but if he wants to precisionise, he will say: "I am a Mazwaya Makaneta". — "Shibongo a shi diwe", "the family name is never eaten, it is eternal"! (Mboza).

This old name is called *shibongo* from *ku bonga*, to laud, to praise. It is a *laudatory name*. People use it as such on two different occasions : 1) *When they salute each other*. A friend who meets Mboza on the road will say to him : "Shawan, Makaneta", "good morning Makaneta"! But also : "Shawan Makhetshe"! (Makhetshe is the grandfather of Makaneta); or : "Shawan Mazwaya" or "Shawan Nwamasuluke". (Masuluke is the proper father of Mboza).

(1) One might raise the objection that, in former centuries, the celebrated Monomotapa already founded a great kingdom. But what it exactly was, nobody knows. The descriptions of the chroniclers of those times are not very trustworthy, as we shall see from a quotation which will be made later on.

2) When they try *to comfort babies*. Should Mboza's son cry, his nurse will say : " Myela, Makaneta ñwa yindlu ya ntima", " keep quiet Makaneta, of the black hut". It may also be that some one wishing to console himself in affliction will do the same. Notice these last words : " of the black hut". They mean : " You who belong to a village where the huts have had time to become black; they have never been destroyed by enemies, as no enemy dares to attack your clan ! So the roofs have blackened inside under the action of the smoke and outside from that of the rain !" It is customary to add to the name of the ancestor words similar to these, in order the more to flatter the man you salute, or the baby you console.

Thus each clan has a *laudatory phrase* which is sometimes much longer than the Makaneta one. Masinga is called "wa le hondjosin", "the one who reigns over the red earth," (more fertile than the sand). The Matinana or Ngomane are lauded thus : " Nkandjetele wa ku woma, ku baleka minambyana" "the one who tramples on a dry place, and rivers begin to flow", because he is so heavy, so powerful ! (Compare p. 87) A Ngomane man will address his paternal aunt with the same words, when offering her a present.

Here are some of the best known shibongo. Their meaning is sometimes unknown as they often contain ancient and obsolete expressions :

The *Hoñwana* : Nwahomu ya ntima ñwa mu-Nondjwana, — the black ox of Nondjwana (or Nondwane).

The Shirindja : Mudzunga ntima wa le dzungen, — black South of the South ?

Mpfumo : Ba hlela misaba ba khabuta, — they winnow the sand they eat it. (The sand is so white in their country that it resembles mealies flour: they are never wanting food.)

Libombo : Libombola Ndlopfu, — Elephant's face.

Nkuna : Ba homu ! Ba nyari ! ya makhwiri, Nwashitjimba buraka, ba mahlwen ka ntima. — Those of the ox ! Those of the buffalo, the buffalo with the large belly which rolls in the mud, the one with a black spot on the forehead !

Rikotjo : Ba Nyamasi, — those of the nyamari tree.

Khosa: Ba ripanga ro sheka ba ntsindja, — those of the keen edged swordwhich "cuts" disputes brought to the capital. (The Khosa chiefs were reputed for their wisdom in deciding judicial or politicalmatters.)

Hlabi : Ba Nhlabi va ku vengwa, Nhlabi ya Makamu ya Mavuse ya nkoñwana, — the Hlabi who are hated, sons of Makamu, of Mavuse, of the calf(?)

Hlengwe : Shikobela sha Matsheme, Tshauke wa Matsheme (names of old chiefs).

Tembe : Mulao Ngolanyama madlaya a nga di makhama a nga di, a dlayele bahloti : — Mulao (son of Tembe ?), the lion which kills and does not eat, the hawk which kills, it kills for the hunters, viz., it is so well fed itself, so rich that it can leave the meat for others. Such a sentence was pronounced in former times by subjects entering the royal kraal, crawling on their knees, when they wanted to receive food from the chief.

Nhanlganu: Ba ku hlomula fumo, ba renga ndlela: — those who unsheath the sword in order to buy the road, (the right of passing through a foreign country). (1)

* * *

If we cross the plain of the Sabi and reach the Drakensberg, we find that all the Pedi tribes dwelling together with the Thonga in the Leydenburg and Zoutpansberg district, possess laudatory names which they also call *seboko*, the same word as shibongo; but most of these names are names of animals, and are called by the technical term *mutshupu*, totem: the animal is the emblem or totem of the group. The Pedi clans are totemic. This

(1) This custom of praising the various tribes in such terms is so familiar to the Thonga that they have invented some similar expressions for the White people themselves: The Portuguese are: Ba ka nâofazmalo, — the Sons of Never mind, because they seem to the natives to be somewhat careless or indifferent. The English are: Bana ba Nhluleki, a hluleka ku hleka, a tiba ku lwa, — the sons of the one who cannot, he cannot laugh, he knows how to fight! Perhaps natives consider them, on the contrary, somewhat too earnest, too keen!

means that, not only do they glorify themselves in comparing themselves with an animal and taking its name, but they think that there is a mysterious relation of life between it and their social group. I cannot here relate all the facts I gathered amongst them on the subject, and which I intend publishing later on. Let me merely mention the following details: the Kaha of the Shiluvane valley have the small grey antelope, called duyker, as totem. They salute each other in these words: "Goni! Phudi!" *Goni* is probably the name of an old ancestor, the same as Nkuna for the Ba-Nkuna; but *phudi* means duyker. They consider it taboo to make a *ntehe* with its skin for their children. Some of them do not eat the flesh of that antelope, fearing lest their children become idiotic, or be covered with boils. They will not sit near a man of another clan who is manipulating the skin of a duyker. The Mashila (Sekukuni's people), who have the porcupine as totem, say: "It is taboo even to tread on its dung: the soles of the feet would become sore." Many clans are afraid to kill the animal which is their totem; it is not a law enforced by the chiefs; the totem itself punishes them if they trangress it. However nowhere did I find the idea that they descend from the totem. They say: "The old people have noticed that the flesh of such and such an animal made the people of their clan ill; so they proclaimed it taboo."

Nothing of this kind is met with amongst the Thonga. The Thonga clans are *atotemic*. Many men bear the name of animals, but it is merely a means of glorifying themselves; there is no taboo with regard to the flesh, skin, dung of that animal. I have come to this conclusion after a careful investigation. Here are the only facts which I discovered, which may be said to be in touch with totemic customs.

The first is that the shibongo sometimes gives an opportunity for *more or less clever jokes*. There is, near Rikatla, a clan called *Shibindji*. Shibindji means liver. When a man of this group meets with others who eat liver, they say to him: "Come along, we are going to run this skewer through you and to roast you!" Another clan is the *Ntcheko* and this word means a tumbler or a small calabash with an elongated handle used for

drinking purposes (p. 48). At the bukanye time, when everybody is getting these calabashes ready for the feast, they say: "Alas! poor creatures that we are! People are going to carry us from one end of the country to the other, to dip us into their pots and drink out of us!..." And so on. This is no totemism. I have however met with four more facts which must be mentioned, and which are very interesting.

1) In the neighbourhood of Pietersburg a Thonga who belongs to the Rikotcho clan, but whose shibongo is *Nwangwenya*, the son of the crocodile, is said to "dance the crocodile" (tshina ngwenya). These Thonga words are the expression used by the Pedi to indicate their totemic customs, (hu bina kwena), not that there is any special dance or song performed in the honour of the sacred animal; this may have been the case formerly, but is not so now.

2) The laudatory name of the Nkuna clan is also said to be a *ntshupu*, though it does not implicate any taboo. This word, which is unknown in other parts of Thongaland, corresponds to the Pedi *mutshupu* which indicates totemic animals. The Nkuna men like to be saluted by these words: "Nkuna! Homu (ox)! Nyari (buffalo)!" There are a number of Pedi tribes who "dance to the buffalo". Mankhelu assured me that, as the Nkuna have the same totem as these tribes, they have a common origin, they have come from the same place in Zululand. This assertion is so evidently erroneous that he could not maintain it. The old man has not the slightest idea of historical accuracy: he had only unconsciously drawn a conclusion as to a common origin from a similarity of totem. Moreover, in his set of divinatory bones, he used to represent his own tribe by a small piece of ox bone, just in the same way as Pedi diviners do for their various tribes, representing them with the astragalus of their totems.

As regards these two incidents, they are easily explained by the influence of the Suto tribes amongst which these Thonga have been living for a long time. Nothing of the kind is met with amongst the Thonga who have remained in their own country, and Maaghe, the Pedi-Khaha chief, assured me that

this appellation of the Nkuna as Nyari, buffalo, is modern and borrowed from the Pedi. The Nkuna do not keep any taboo in connexion with the ox, and this shows that their totemic custom is a mere external imitation of the Suto fashion. I might call these two instances: cases of *secondary* or *adopted totemism*. Considering only the Thonga as compared with the Pedi, we might be tempted to conclude that the Thonga have preserved the old Bantu custom of naming themselves after their ancestor; just as the Thonga used to add to that name other laudatory expressions, we might suppose that the Pedi tribes have adopted names of animals to glorify themselves; in the course of time, the essentially totemic fears and taboos could have made their way into the customs, owing to the importance given to the shibongo. This would be a rationalistic explanation of totemism. A priori it could not be said to be impossible. Though totemism appears to be a very old custom in humanity, it is not necessary, per se, that the Bantu tribes should have all passed through that phase of primitive belief.

3) I must, however mention a third instance which shows that this notion of a community of life between an animal and a human group must have existed also amongst the ancient Thonga. There are, *in their folklore*, tales which seem to have been inspired by such old and now lost ideas, especially the tale of Titishan, which I have published in "Les chants et contes des Ba-Ronga", page 253. A girl named Titishan marries a man. When she goes to her husband's home, she asks her parents to give her their cat. They refuse; they say: "You know that our life is attached to it." She insists and they at last consent. She shuts the animal up in a place where nobody sees it. Her husband even ignores its existence. One day, when she goes to the fields, the cat escapes from its kraal, enters the hut, puts on the war ornaments of the husband, dances and sings. Children, attracted by the noise, discover it and inform the master of the village of the strange dancer they have seen... He goes and kills it. At the very moment Titishan falls on the ground, in her garden. She says: "I have been killed at home." She asks her husband to accompany her, with the corpse of the

cat wrapped in a mat, to her parents' village. All her relatives attend. They severely reproach their daughter for having insisted on taking the animal. The mat is unrolled and, as soon as they have seen the dead cat, they all fall lifeless one after the other. The Clan-of-the-Cat is destroyed and the husband returns home after having closed the gate of the village with a branch (See Page 293): "Their life was in the cat."

Folk-tales are very ancient and this one is by no means unique of its kind. (Compare Jacottet's "Treasury of the Ba-Suto Lore", Morija 1908, Masilo punished for having eaten zebra's meat.) It shows that the totemic idea existed in former times, in those remote periods of the evolution which some Bantu tribes have now outgrown.

4) A fourth fact tends to show that a mystic relation between an animal and a clan has existed in former times. There is, in the North of the Transvaal, a kind of antelope called by the natives *Shidyanaman*. It is taboo to kill it: "If a Nkuna does so, his family will die during the year, his wife, his children, his own head. Should he kill one by mistake, he must cry with a loud voice and shout: — Yoo! Shana n'ta da na mane! Alack! with whom shall I eat it?" Mankhelu says it is taboo to eat its flesh, but the taboo is removed by this formula. The Ba-Nkuna do not know how to explain this custom. It may be a relic of former totemic ideas. However Mankhelu does not call the shidyanaman a mutshupu, a totem, and these customs may seem to be in relation with the *nuru* superstition (Comp. Ch. IV and Part IV, hunting customs). But even supposing the Thonga have gone through the totemic phase, the actual clans have entirely forgotten these ancient beliefs.

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My aim in the following chapter is to describe the typical Bantu clan, this small collectivity of some hundreds or thousands of souls, with its hereditary chief, and not the larger tribe, formed by the amalgamation of many clans by a military despot (Chaka), or a cunning diplomat (Moshesh). Some of us have

still seen the court of Gungunyane at Mandlakazi, before this last South African military Empire was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1895 and 1896. Dr Liengme, one of my colleagues, has described some of the striking customs of this court in the Report of the S.A.A.A.S of 1904 and in the *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, of 1901. I refer the reader to these publications and will be satisfied with the more modest, but not less interesting life, of the old Thonga clan.

In this small community the *Chief* occupies the centre of national life. It is by him that the clan becomes conscious of its unity. Without him it loses its bearings; it has lost its head. The republican conception is as far as possible from the ideas, from the instincts, of these people! So it will he necessary to first study the customs relating to the chief. Then we shall see the part played by the *Counsellors*, a second institution which strengthens and limits the first one. The political system of these tiny kingdoms having been sketched, we shall consider the *Court* and the *Army*, being the two domains in which the national life mostly manifests itself.

CHAPTER II

The Evolution of the chief

A. BIRTH AND YOUTH

(Information received from Tobane, and applying specially to Ronga clans).

When the principal wife of a reigning chief, she who is called "the wife of the country" (nsati wa tiko) perceives that she will in due course present her lord with an heir, she is sent away from the capital into one of the provinces, under pretext of illness. It must not be whispered abroad that she is pregnant, for, from this moment, every precaution must be taken to hide the future chief. Thus, should the event occur in the country of Mpfumo, the expectant mother might be sent into the province of Pulane.

The infant comes into the world : should it prove to be a boy, the fact is kept a secret. Only the most renowned doctors of the country, those attached to the royal family, those who are "the strength of the land" (le' ti yimisaka tiko), are assembled to watch the birth : they prepare, with special care, the *milombyana* (p. 46). When the queen goes out carrying her child on her back, she covers it with a piece of cloth to prevent anyone seeing whether it be a boy or a girl ! She even dresses him in girl's clothing, because it is dangerous (psa henyanya), it is taboo to say in a loud voice : "This child will be a chief." Such an imprudent declaration would bring him bad luck (singita), just in the same manner as would male clothing. (Mankhelu).

The royal offspring grows unrecognised, and is weaned in the

same way as other children. The mother returns to the capital, the child remaining in the village where he was born.

However, specially appointed persons watch over him and report of his well being to his father. His youthful playmates are taught to respect him ; he is surrounded in his games by a miniature court, from which he chooses his favourites (tinxe-kwa); some of his companions act as counsellors and reprimand those who do not treat him with due respect. They play at court... also at soldiers ; the juvenile troop wage war with the wasps, and also with the boys of the adjoining villages.

When the child reaches boyhood, the bones are consulted, and sacrifices offered in order to ascertain from the gods whether it be well to take him to the capital ? Should the answer be in the negative, there is nothing to do but to wait. When the dice declare the propitious time to have arrived, the transfer is effected and the boy taken to his father. This is a great feast day for the cousellors who have watched over the boy and who thenceforward supervise his education. They treat themselves well (ba fumisana), kill goats, perhaps even an ox, and offer a sacrifice to proclaim to the gods the return to the capital of the heir to the throne ; to his ankle is tied the astragalus of a slaughtered goat, as a protective amulet.

At puberty the boy undergoes, in the same manner as his companions, all the ceremonial rites usual at that period. The principal doctors of the country treat him, in order that hence-forth he may be a man (ba mu yimisa a ba wanuna), having full right to enter into the sexual relations of gangisa (p. 96). Care is taken, however, to attach to his person comrades of riper age, who will prevent him giving way to excesses, (suka banhwanyana la' bakulu ba ta mu gema, ba mu sibela ku kula), which would arrest his growth and render him small and feeble. He thus lives in relative continence, participating in the play and in the work of boys of his own age, looking after the herds. At times he gives a feast, when his father happens to have presented him with an ox, with which to make merry.

Now we see him arrived at manhood, at the age when the Blacks take a wife. If his father is still living, the young man

is not allowed to be married officially. He may certainly lobola, viz., contract regular marriage in the usual way, and possibly some woman may come and live with him (titlhuba), as in cases of elopement — in which case he must go, according to the law, early in the morning to the parents of the girl and denounce himself as the abductor (p. 120); but no one of these women can be his official wife: they may bear him children, but these will be *makohlwa*, those who have no right to royalty; the young chief may not wed his official wife, she who is to become the mother of the heir to the throne, until after the death of his father.

There is a saying, a precept of the royal code as follows: "Hosi a yi faneli ku bona ntukulu", a chief must never see his grandson, i. e. the one who will eventually succeed his son in the royal line. The Ba-Ngoni of Gungunyane (in Gaza) have the same custom; but with them matters are differently arranged. The eldest son of the chief's principal wife, when at the age requisite for marriage, takes a wife and loses the right of succession; it is the youngest son, still young at the time of his father's death, who inherits the throne, because he has no children of his own. This leads to jealousy, civil war between brothers; it has brought numberless misfortunes to the royal family of Gaza, and it was one of the causes of the downfall of Gungunyane. The Thonga custom is much the more simple and less dangerous to the maintenance of peace; the chief must not see his grandson, therefore his son will not be officially married until after his father's death. Any wives he may previously have taken, will be morganatic and their children not entitled to inherit.

I have been told by Mankhelu that when a chief lives to be very old and does not like to delay the marriage of his son and heir, he can himself pay the lobolo and acquire, for his son, the official wife who will be considered as being "the wife of the country". But this seems to be an exceptional occurrence.

B. CORONATION OF THE CHIEF

In all Thonga clans the death of a chief is kept secret for one year or more, as we shall see. Amongst the Nkuna the official mourning for the deceased takes place the same day as the coronation of his successor. All the regiments of the army are summoned, together with groups of warriors delegated by foreign clans. The mourning ceremonies are first performed (See later on). Then, at the end of the afternoon, says Mankhelu, the great counsellors send a herald to the circle of warriors. He shouts : " Khaula ! " viz., " keep silent ! " The new chief comes out of the hut and stands alone in the midst of the circle. " Do you see him ", says the herald... " It is the chief ! " — " Who is he ? " ask the warriors, who want to know his new name. — " It is Muhlaba Dabuka ", he answered, when the actual Nkuna chief was proclaimed. Formerly his name was Shikuna. Now he adopted this new name, borrowed from one of the Ngoni chiefs of Bilen. " He who wants to fight, can fight ", he adds. It is an invitation to those who protest against the coronation to state it plainly. When Muhlaba was proclaimed, the Masakomo family left the capital in anger, as they thought they were deprived of their right. (See later on). Such an occurrence is not rare owing to the irregularities which so frequently take place in the successions.

If the chief is still a child he is carried on a shield, or put on the roof of a hut, so that everybody may see him.

In the Ronga clans the ceremony takes place as follows. Let me describe it with all the details supplied by Tobane.

First of all sacrifices are made to the gods to ask that this ceremony may pass off quietly, happily, without quarrelling and then the date is fixed. Invitations are sent to the surrounding little kingdoms, or, at least, to all those who are on friendly relations with the tribe. For instance, supposing the installation to be that of the chief of Mpfumo, invitations would be sent to Maputju, Tembe, Matjolo, Nondwane, Nwamba and Shirinda. Maniysa

and Ntimane are regarded as " being of a different mind " (moya munwana), and " good will only reaches as far as the river Nkomati ", to give a literal translation of the expression used by my informant ; this means that relations with the more distant countries are hardly those of even ordinary civility. The warriors of the invited tribes assemble, in greater or smaller numbers ; sometimes only a few delegates attend, but they do not proceed at once to the capital. Etiquette requires that each one should first go to the Mpfumo Counsellor who acts now as an Agent General for his own tribe ; they are well received by him and fed while waiting for the day of the coronation.

When it is known that all the foreign military contingents have arrived, then the Mpfumo army is also assembled and all together march to the capital. The royal family council, composed of uncles and the older relatives of the new chief, meets in a separate hut. The presiding member opens the proceedings as follows : " Si hi humeliliki : si hi humililiki, hi fanela ku beka hosi kutani ! (See ! what has happened ! This having happened to us we must install a new chief !) " The rest approve and reply according to etiquette. On an immense open space, all the warriors form a circle (biya mukhumbi). Battalion after battalion takes up its position within this living enclosure. An opening is left in this otherwise perfect circle, and through it enters the bodyguard, composed of young men of the same age as the new chief, with the chief himself hidden in their midst, wearing his full military uniform and accoutrements : ostrich feathers on his head, strands of hair from cow's tails on his biceps and the calves of his legs, etc.

A specially appointed functionary, the bearer of the chiefs (mutlakuli wa tihosi), penetrates into the middle of the bodyguard and raises the young chief on his shoulders in the presence of the assembled armies. The great counsellors, the secondary chiefs and all the young men of the Royal Family, then accompany the bearer of the king and with him march round the inner side of the circle of warriors, shouting as they go :

Hosi hi lèyi ! Dlayan ! Dlayan !
Behold the chief ! Kill him ! Kill him !
A ku na yimbeni !
There is no other than he !
Hi tiba yoleyi.
We recognise none other.
Dlayan ! Lwa nga ni yimpi !
Kill him ! if there be any here who can raise an army (to oppose him).

To those shouts of defiance the several battalions reply consecutively as the procession passes them : " Bayete ! Bayete ! ndjao ! " These words form the royal salute, to which all the independent chiefs are entitled. (1) The *elevation and the presentation* ended, the next proceeding is the *gila* or war dance. The heroes of the army (batlhabani ba fumo), and the young men of blood royal, rush one after the other into the enclosure brandishing their weapons, jumping as high as they possibly can, imitating acts of prowess on the battle field and simulating the transfixion of their enemies. The *gila* continues until the cry is heard : " Ye-yi, yé-yi, ye-yi. " This murmuring sound coming from the whole army, marks the end of the jumping and all reform into line. All the shields must now touch one another, forming an immense unbroken circle, and then comes

(1) The word *Bayete* is said to be of Zulu origin and to convey the following meaning : bring thine enemies hither and destroy them ! *Ndjao* means lion. The warriors employ these terms to extol the power of their chief and, at the same time, to express their allegiance to him. There is a modern tendency to use this solemn salutation in a more general manner : for instance it is addressed to the Whites and not only to those in authority, but more or less to every one, even, in certain cases, to missionaries ! I always recollect my arrival at the village of Shirinda, when I went to call on the chief Mahatlane, then unknown to me. I arrived at the gate of the kraal mounted on a most unpretentions little donkey and enquired of two young men who were there where I could find the chief. " Bayete ! " was the salutation I received and there was certainly nothing very regal either in my appearance or my " mount ". One of these young men proved to be Mahatlane himself ! *Bayete* is also frequently used in acknowledging a gift from a superior and would then be merely the equivalent of " thank you. " In Gaza, Gungunyane would not allow Bayete to be said to any one but himself. All the petty chiefs of the Ba-Ronga insisted on their royal salutation and the Ngoni king could not put a stop to it, as they were direct dependencies of the Whites and did not derive their authority from him.

the *guba,* the intonation of the solemn chant which is at once the principal patriotic song of the tribe, the coronation hymn, the dirge of mourning, the war-song, and the sacred melody par excellence :

> Sabela ! Sabela nkosi ! Ji ! Ji !
> Answer us ! Answer us, o chief ! Ji ! Ji !
> Si ya ku wela mulambu mkulu wa ka nkosi.
> Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief.

This chant which is in the Zulu language, is difficult to understand. The soloist commences with : " Sabela nkosi " which might be translated " Obey the chief " ; but the meaning would rather seem to be : " Reply to us, chief ! " and, if taken in this sense, these words would be a request made by the army to the chief, to which he will reply in executing the dance which follows. To this exclamation of the soloist the warriors respond by striking their shields with their assagais producing a hard, sharp sound, which the chant tries to render by the syllable " Ji ! Ji ! " Then they stamp the feet, saying : " Vu ! Vu ! " and this enigmatic sentence : " Yes, we will cross the great river, the river of the chief ". What is this river ? Can it be that which separates the Mpfumo country from Khosen, namely the Nkomati ? Or the Mitembe, marking the frontier between the Northern and the Southern Ba-Ronga ? Or do not these mysterious words rather refer to the river of death, which the entire host should cross without hesitation if called to do so by their chief ? Whatever the exact meaning may be, this chant must be an assurance of loyalty on the part of the warriors to their king and probably also an appeal to his valour.

The chant ended, no one is allowed to leave the ranks. The chief alone rushes into the enclosure; every warrior holds his shield in his hand and strikes it with hard sharp blows (ku ba ngomana) ; on hearing these, the chief begins to *gila* in his turn. He executes the war-dance brandishing his assagai, as if killing invisible ennemies. The crowd encourages him, inciting him to still further efforts, crying : " Silo ! Silo ! Silo ! Beast of the fields ! Lion ! " Volleys are fired. The chief redoubles his

exertions, gesticulating furiously, perspires profusely, is well nigh exhausted and finally he stops! All the army sit on the ground and the young king is supplied with a jug of beer to quench his thirst.

When the ceremony has lasted long enough, and the warriors have enjoyed at their ease the spectacle of their chief's prowess, the Commander in chief dismisses the battalions, one after the other. The circle (mukhumbi) breaks up and all rush to the residence of their respective counsellors, singing as they go the praises of the particular army-corps to which they belong. The members of the Royal Family return to the capital where they remain. A counsellor presents each group or regiment with the ox which has been allotted to it; this is accepted with shouts of "bayete". The men cut up the animal, divide the meat and eat it in their respective quarters.

It is worthy of notice that no sacrifice is offered on this day, neither is any religious ceremony whatsoever performed. The coronation appears to be a purely military affair, a sort of oath of loyalty taken by the people to their chief and by the chief to his people.

C. THE OFFICIAL MARRIAGE OF THE CHIEF

The chief being duly installed, the next thing to do is to provide him with his officially recognised wife, *the wife of the country*, she who is to become the mother of the future king. This wife must be bought with the pennies of the people: a characteristic custom demonstrating forcibly to how great an extent the Royal Family is at once the property and the pride of the nation.

One fine day, says Tobane, when the counsellors go to visit the new chief, they meet with a very cold reception: "Who do you suppose is going to feed you? Who will cook the meat? Who is going to brew the beer?" They return quite crestfallen, but having perfectly understood the allusion. The chief wishes to remind them that the time has arrived for them to

find him a wife. This roundabout way of coming to the point is much in vogue with the Blacks. The matter is at first discussed in secret by the brothers and sisters of the deceased ruler, a family council who hold conclave "in the hut", i.e. privately. After due consultation, a messenger is dispatched to the principal men of the country, to the heads of the younger branches of the Royal Family (to Khobo, Pulane, Kupane, if Mpfumo be the clan in question) with the following message: "Has not the moment arrived to set up the chief, to cause him to grow, to increase properly? For the country is sustained by its cock! (1)" The great ones discuss the affair, each in his own village, and a day is fixed for a visit to the capital where it will be concluded.

Let us examine the procedure in the case of the marriage of Nwamantibyane, the youthful chief of Mpfumo, who has since died in exile. The following account of the discussion preparatory to the marriage is on the authority of Tobane, a witness of the proceedings, and will aptly illustrate the etiquette observed on such occasions.

The dignitaries are assembled, one of them, the brother of the deceased chief, thus commences: "Well you the chiefs of Mpfumo! In reality!. If we are assembled here to-day, is it not that we have truly seen that we must, in fact, increase the chief, and give him the wife of the country? This is all the business, you, the chiefs". One of those addressed replies: "In putting the matter before us, hast thou been unequal to the task? (No! understood). And we, what further words could we add? Nothing remains to be said... You then tell us what we shall have to give you, dwellers in the capital!" Then the secondary chiefs say: "For our part, we will give each one pound sterling or an ox, as you may prefer." The headmen of the villages will contribute each ten shillings and each village one shilling besides. In former times, before the circulation of money in the country, each one gave a hoe.

(1) *Dji yima ni nkuku,* a proverbial expression meaning: as the poultry-yard cannot flourish without a cock, so must care be taken of the chief of the country, in order that he may be able to perpetuate the race and secure the succession.

The secondary chiefs go back to their own districts and get together the money or the oxen as the case may be. This done, the fact is duly notified to the capital and all the contributions are conveyed to the chief. An account is kept of all monies or cattle contributed. When Nwamantibyane was married the special subscription amounted to thirty pounds sterling and twenty oxen.

The future queen was chosen from the royal family of Matjolo: her name was Mimalengane. The young chief had only seen her on one occasion, when she was returning from Gaza. Nevertheless she was his first cousin once removed : Hamule, father of Zihlala and grandfather of Nwamantibyane, married the sister of Malengane, chief of Matjolo, and his daughter was Mimalengane (the prefix *mi* signifies daughter of), who was now to become Nwamantibyane's wife. We have already mentioned the fact that marriages between relatives are sanctioned in the royal families. The chiefs of Mpfumo generally marry into the reigning families of Mabota and Matjolo, and these latter seek their wifes at the court of Maputju.

All the preliminaries being settled, the purchase money collected, the young girl chosen, Matshibi, the Mpfumo counsellor acting as Agent General for Matjolo, sent Nwamatshabane, the boy who was his messenger, to Sigaolé, chief of Matjolo, to make the actual proposals for the marriage. The messenger did not address himself directly to the chief but made his entry through the Matjolo Counsellor in charge of Mpfumo affairs, whose name was Mambene. The request was made thus: "We have come to ask our *kokwana*, (that is to say our relative on the mother's side p. 221) in marriage." — "It is well", replied Sigaole, when Mambene has transmitted to him the honourable proposal. — "Go home again, thou shalt come for our reply". A meeting of the members of the Matjolo royal family was then convened, matters discussed, the demand agreed to and the same envoy, flanked by a companion, came, as arranged, to receive the reply. The hut was carefully swept and the enquirers renewed their message: "Our chief is still celibate... He sleeps in his bachelor's quarters" (This was not true, as he had already several wives,

but they did not count!) " He is anxious to get married. Make haste to give him Mimalengane". — "It is well," said the others, "on one of these days we will go and discuss the affair at your place. When will you expect us?"

A day is fixed and the great ones of Matjolo go to see Nwamantibyane. A gorgeous reception has been prepared for them: an ox has been killed in their honour, but they are at first treated in a niggardly manner, are given very short commons for breakfast: for, before anything else can be done, the tiresome money question must be settled.

In the large hut all these important personages take their places with some constraint... The suitor is not present. The real business of the purchase money is not immediately referred to; endless compliments, all sorts of circumlocutions are indulged in, of which the following is a resumé. One of the chief men of Matjolo commences by saying:

"It is all right, as you of Mpfumo, you have desired to renew to-day the old ties of relationship... Hamule your grandfather took his wife from Matjolo. Well! we are obliged to you. Nevertheless Sigaole has sent us to enquire how you intend to make payment for her?"

— "We have thirty pounds sterling" reply the representatives of Mpfumo.

— "Ah! Thirty pounds? That means that Mimalengane will have to chop her own wood and draw her own water?" (That is to say: thirty pounds suffice for the princess... but payment must also be made for two girls, the younger sisters (tinhlantsa), who must accompany her, to help her in the household duties, as is customary).

— "We will ask Nwamantibyiane, what he has to say to this" continues the headman of Mpfumo.

— "How about those twenty oxen?" says the chief to his representatives, when the matter is put before him. The envoy returns to the hut and announces: "There are still twenty oxen!"

— "It is well", say the men of Matjolo, " that will do for two girls to help in the work of the household".

Thus this delicate business is transacted without any great difficulty. The feasting then begins in earnest. All eat until they *shura,* that is until satiated, the stomach protruding in a gentle curve beneath the sternum, which is the black man's idea of a thoroughly satisfactory meal!

The betrothal being duly arranged, there still remain the betrothal visits to be paid and the wedding to be celebrated. Strange to say the chief, in these ceremonies, is conspicuous by his absence! His male friends alone go to see the betrothed, mainly with a view to reporting on her appearance, etc., to their royal master. Moreover when a chief is concerned, the betrothal visit of the suitor's friends is not paid back by the girls, as is the case of ordinary mortals.

The marriage feast takes place, of course, at the bride's home. In Matjolo quantities of beer have been prepared, and the people of Mpfumo are notified when it is sufficiently fermented; the latter then mobilise their military contingent, consisting of a picked battalion of youths and men wearing the wax-crown. They are magnificently attired in skins of civet-cat and other warlike apparel, but carry sticks only and small toy shields (mahahu), as the object of the expedition is eminently peaceful and entirely actuated by friendship. They go first to the house of their Agent General, Mambene, where they are met and conducted to the capital, taking with them the money and oxen which must be handed over to the parents of the princess. The curious sham-fight, details of which we have already noticed when describing ordinary marriages, also takes place on this occasion, the Matjolo people trying to carry off the oxen and the Mpfumo defending themselves and endeavouring to appropriate the jugs of beer which are in the capital. This mock engagement is fairly lively, sticks are wielded with some force and the blows rain heavily until a few wounds are apparent and a little blood is let, when hostilities are at once stopped and friendship reigns supreme.

The money and oxen are given to Sigaole, chief of Matjolo in the presence of witnesses. Mpfumo kills a bull for Matjolo and Matjolo slaughters a cow for Mpfumo, without any kind

of religious ceremony: a sacrifice has previously been offered in Matjolo to propitiate their gods in favour of Mimalengane. On the other hand the young folks of the two countries execute the dances peculiar to each clan, trying to outrival one another, for the honour of their country. The guests pass one night at the capital of Matjolo and return to their homes the following day.

The relatives of the bride prepare her trousseau, which is not much richer than in the case of ordinary people: a *ngula*, large basket, in which are placed some maize and other cereals which she will plant in her new home, sundry cooking utensils, saucepans, winnowing baskets, a hoe, an axe: on the subsequent day, all the women accompany her to her husband's dwelling and then go to perform the ceremony of building the wood pile (p. 112). They are regaled with a couple of oxen and return to their home.

The chief's wife is not compelled, as are young married women generally, to live with the mother-in-law and to wait upon her during the whole of the first year of married life. The chief, immediately on the home-coming of his bride, calls together his young men, who rapidly build for him a new village, his village, which will henceforth become the capital of the country and will be given a distinctive name.

Nwamantibyiane's royal kraal was known as Hlanzini, and he had chosen a site for it on the confines of the Nwamba country in order to avoid a too close proximity to the Portuguese Commandant living at Hangwana.

Crowned, married, in his new residence, the chief has now nothing to do but to reign.

* * *

Mankhelu relates the proceedings of the official marriage amongst the Ba-Nkuna in the following manner: — All the principal headmen send an ox to the capital, assemble there, kill one of the oxen, eat it and discuss who shall be the "wife of the coun-

try."(1) They ask the chief: "Whom do you love?" He answers: "The daughter of such and such a chief". They go to the father of that girl and say: "Eat the lobolo and give your daughter to the chief". This man may refuse. Should he consent, this girl will become the wife of the country: "the earth has bought her"; she will give birth to the future chief.

Should a great number of oxen be provided by the country, those which are in excess of the lobola price will go with the chief and princess to their new village " in order to provide milk for them. "

The reason why it is not taboo for a chief to marry a near relative is this, according to Mankhelu : " Nothing is taboo for him because he is the earth (hosi i misaba, a yi yili ntshumu). He even might take a girl from the houses of his younger brothers because everything is allowable for him. He has no sin. He is the one who makes the laws. Even if they were bad, people must accept them... " This identification of the chief with the earth is most curious and we will remember it when treating of the sacred character of the chief.

The wife paid for by the money of the country, though she be on the one hand the official one, is on the other hand inferior to the first wife married by the chief. He does not perform the rites of widowhood when she dies (See page 199).

A chief, when he travels always takes his wives with him.

(1) In the case of Muhlaba, Mankhelu himself received the fifteen oxen of the lobolo of the village and kept them for a time. Other subjects had given £ 1, a hoe, a goat or nothing, if they could not afford to contribute. Nobody refused, but some had nothing to give! Never mind! In the meantime one of the oxen broke its leg. The mother of Muhlaba said to Mankhelu : " See! the oxen of the lobolo die. Take a wife for the chief. " Muhlaba was consulted and chose a girl from the Makaringe clan. Mankhelu had already taken a wife amongst those people who were consequently his bakokwana. He went to them with the proposal; they consented. Then Muhlaba accompanied Mankhelu on a second visit to the Makaringe who killed an ox for him and helped him to eat it!

D. THE REIGN

I. *The sacred character of the Chief.*

Let me say at once that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, the paraphernalia of royalty are reduced to a minimum. The chief is as scantily attired as are his subjects : possibly his belt of tails may be more plentifully garnished with these appendages. His huts are built on the same lines as the others ; his village may be larger but sometimes it is smaller. (1)

In the old Portuguese documents, and especially in an account written by a military commandant to the prelate of Mozambique, at the end of the XVIII[th] century, the chiefs of the countries in the vicinity of the Bay were described in grandiloquent terms : " They are very powerful, very rich, most honourable, generous and respected. " The Chief of Khosen is called the Grand Cacha, and is described as " a kind of Emperor. " Though it is probable that, in former times, the regal paraphernalia of the Thonga chiefs were more brillant than now, these are manifest exaggerations, such as are often met with in the tales of the old explorers, but there is nevertheless a good deal of truth in these accounts. " Royalty ", in the mind of the native, is a venerable and sacred institution ; respect for the Chief, and obedience to his commands are universal : his prestige is maintained, not

(1) One day when taking a walk on the hill of Rikatla, I came to a field where, in the shade of a magnificent tree, I found three individuals — the three most powerful personages of the country — modestly squatting on their haunches and scaring the sparrows from their plantation of sorghum. The trio consisted of Muzila, the young chief, his brother and Makhani, his chief counsellor, who were devoting themselves to this tiresome occupation in the same way as the meanest of their subjects !

This same Muzila had several younger brothers, one of whom was engaged to look after our oxen, at a salary of ten shillings a month. One day the boy was ill. It happened to pour in torrents on that particular day, and whom should I see about ten o'clock in the morning, coming along absolutely drenched through and through, but the chief Muzila ! " I am looking after your oxen to-day " said he " in place of my brother... Here I am, and I have just come to let you know that I am going to water them ! "

by a great display of riches and of power, but by the mystical idea that, as the body lives by nourishment taken through its head, so the life of the nation is sustained through its chief.

The Thonga do not explain this in abstract words, but by images which are very striking. The chief is the Earth, as we have seen. He is the cock by which the country is sustained. (Tobane). Mankhelu adds : " He is the bull ; without him the cows cannot bring forth. He is the husband ; the country without him is like a woman without husband. He is the man of the village. Should a dog bark, if there is no man, nobody will dare to go out of the hut and ascertain the danger that threatens, nobody will have the courage to chase away the hyena. A clan without chief has lost its reason (hungukile). It is dead. Because who will call the army together ? There is no army anymore ! The chief is our great warrior (nhena), he is our forest where we hide ourselves and from whom we ask for laws. The tinduna cannot proclaim laws. "

Conscious of this position, the chief does his best to maintain and to increase his prestige. He must not be too familiar. He does not eat with his subjects except with some favourites. Sometimes he eats alone in his hut. Or, when he has slaughtered and ox, he chooses amongs the various joints those he prefers, feasts before his subjects who look on respectfully, " swallowing their own saliva", (viz., their mouths watering the while). He sometimes throws a piece of meat to one of his favourites who accepts it with both hands, shouting : " Bayete ! " In the Tembe capital, men crawled on their knees before the chief shouting : " Ngolanyama " " Lion ! ". Nwangundjuwana, the chief of Nwamba, was known for his more democratic ways. He used to eat with his men.

To shake hands with a chief was also considered as taboo before the days of Christianity. Now Muhlaba somewhat reluctantly accepts the hand which is extended to him by the most modest of his subjects, even by children on Christmas Day. The idea, which is at the bottom of the fear, is that the chief is a magical being. He possesses special medicines with which he rubs himself or which he swallows, so that his body is taboo

(ntjumbu wa hosi wa yila). He is dangerous. " When he points at you with his finger, you are a dead man" (Mboza). Owing to the charms with which he had smeared his body, Maphunga, the chief of Nondwane, made those who discussed State affairs with him, even White people, unable to answer him or to resist his will (Mboza). In order to increase this salutary fear, some chiefs had the curious custom of *disappearing for a time* (tumba) " just the same as a big caterpillar when it enters the ground and becomes a chrysalis. " The same Maphunga used to remain invisible during one week each year before the great bukanye feast. (1) We shall see the same rite practised by the great magicians, who also aspire to create a deep impression on the imagination of the people. (See Part VI). As already mentioned, the chief alone must be addressed by the royal salutation "Bayete" or "Baheti". The hosana has no right to it, legally and must be addressed by the term "Baba", "Father". As regards subjects, they are called *malandja*, from the verb ku landja, to follow, the followers. The Chief is the one who walks in front, whom the malandja, the ordinary folk, follow from motives of submission and fidelity, much as a dog follows his master from attachment, but is ready to fight for him should occasion arise.

The *name of the chief* must not be pronounced on any and every occasion. Should it contain a word which designates another object, the name of this object must be changed. So the Mpfumu chief *Nwamantibyane* found that his name was too similar to *ntibu* (diminutive *ntibyane)*, a certain antelope. It was henceforth taboo to call this animal ntibu in his territory. It had to be called nguya. Zihlahla, the father of Nwamantibyane went even further than his son : his counsellors complained that he gave them no meat to eat, keeping all for himself. " He is a dog ", they said. The chief overheard the

(1) This custom is met with amongst the Pedi where old chiefs abandon their kraals and go to live in the desert for years, leaving a prince regent in their stead. This kind of hermit life gives them a great prestige. The Pedi chief Sikororo, near Shiluvane, is the best-known case of such a disappearance. Sexual continence, even repugnance for women, was one of his reasons for this seclusion which lasted until his death. (1903 or 1904).

remark and took action in the following decree : "Let it be know all over the country that *mbyana*, the dog, is I. When you pronounce this word, you will be referring to your chief. I therefore command you hereafter to call real dogs *kalawana*." And this was done for some time. So, in Nondwane, people proclaimed as taboo the verb *ku phunga*, to sprinkle, and replaced it by *ku kweba*, which means to drink, in order not to offend Maphunga. This custom of showing respect, by avoiding to use the name of a chief in connexion with ordinary objects, is even extended to other men, if they are particularly noted. So a great personage of the Maputju clan having been named Mahlahla, which means small branches, these had to be called mavinda. The prohibition to pronounce the name of the chief can go so far that even names of deceased chiefs are taboo, at least in the Bilen region. So the petty chief of Rikatla had been called *Muzila* after the great Ngoni chief, son of Manukosi and father of Gungunyana. But people used to call him *Mbozin* fearing lest the warriors of Bilen might say: "What is that? Where have you hidden him? Show us Muzila. We contend that he died long ago!"

These are traces of the *hlonipha* custom, which is, however, not so much developed amongst Thongas than amongst Zulus.

The name of the chief is sacred in so far as it is generally used in oaths. When asked to swear, a Nondwane man will say: "Maphunga!" (1)

(1) Kidd, in his *Kafir Socialism*, has asserted that Bantu chiefs are very jealous and kill their subjects when they become too rich and thus overshadow them. This may be the case in other tribes or when a military government has taken the place of the old patriarchal system. Amongst the Thonga it is not true. My informants could not quote a single instance of a murder committed by a chief for that reason alone. I heard about Shiluvane killing a subject called Muhluhluni who had acquired too much power ; but Muhluhluni had declared that he wanted to usurpe the chieftainship ; so it was a case of high treason! A rich nduna, in the territory of Nhandja (Nondwane), was also killed and his oxen taken by the chief because he had tried to abduct one of the chief's wives. But many headmen had as many oxen as Maphunga and were not troubled by him on that account : " Why should he hate them ? They could not harm him, as he was protected by the supernatural powers, and they brought him all the more beer as they had plenty of wives and consequently of mealies! "

II) *The Regalia.*

Kings everywhere like to adorn themselves with specially imposing objects, insignia of their office, which differentiate them from their subjects. The Thonga chiefs have no peculiar crown — the shidlodlo belonging to all adults (p. 129) —, no special garment, no sceptre and no throne. We sometimes translate by the word throne *shilubelo* viz., the place where one *luba*, pays the tax; but it is only a hut smaller than others and subjects can also possess it (See page 282). However there are, in some of these small kingdoms, royal objects which can be called regalia (bukosi bya hosi).

Amongst the Nkuna, the chief possesses a large copper bracelet called *ritlatla*, which was bought very long ago, in Lourenço Marques, by the Nkuna people in exchange for tusks of elephants, says Mankhelu. According to others, the ritlatla was made in old times by natives from the copper, or even from the gold dug by them. The ritlatla was in the hands of the elder branch of the Nkuna clan ; Hoshana was its headman ; but he had fled into the Nwamba country during the troubled period of 1855 to 1860. When he died, his people brought the ritlatla to the chief Shiluvane who belonged to a younger branch, thinking that, at his death, the ritlatla together with the chieftainship would be given back to them. But they were disappointed in their hope : Shiluvane kept both the ritlatla and the power and left them to his son, Muhlaba, as we shall see. Legends are current about the ritlatla. It is said to be able to move of its own will. "This piece of metal is indeed a wonderful thing", wrote a young Nkuna, to me "because when one buries it in the soil, as black people use to do with their treasures, one must put inside of it a piece of iron to prevent it from going away ; if they do not take this precaution, the ritlatla can leave the place where it was and go somewhere else. In the lapse of one year, it can reach as far as the Masetana spruit (about one mile)".

Another royal property of the Nkuna family was an *elephant's tusk*, which vanquished enemies had brought as a token of their submission.

In Nondwana, the old chief Papele who preceeded Maphunga and lived in the middle of the last century, wore a *kind of chignon* or bun made by plaiting his hair, which was a sign of royalty (shifoko). But this custom has fallen off. There was also *a long stick* which was kept exposed to the smoke of the royal fire in the sacred hut of *nyokwekulu*, which I shall describe presently, and which was called *ntjobo* and also *mbamba*, viz., offering, evidently of religious value for the clan, and was taken outside when the army assembled. It possessed the power of becoming invisible to enemies. Mboza could not tell more about this venerated object. It is perhaps a thing similar to the *mhamba* of the Tembe, which consisted in the nails and hair of the deceased chiefs fixed together by a kind of wax, and which was used as means of propitiation in national calamities. (See Part VI).

These regalia are indeed not very imposing to the eye. Thonga royalty had no brilliant insignia... But it had more than that! Each clan possessed a special medicine whose magical virtues were greatly esteemed ; its possession made the chief invincible, the warriors invulnerable, the country unconquerable. This powerful charm is called *mbhulo* (Dj.), *mphulo* (Ro.).

Amongst the Nkuna, the mbhulo is called *Nwantikalala*. It is kept by the people of the Mushwane house, and a man called Papalati is responsible for it. It consists of four calabashes, two male and two female (as medicines are considered as having sexes, see Part VI) called Madyakakulu, Nwahondyane, Mbengatamilomu, Masemane. The bones are always consulted to ascertain which calabash (nhungubane) must be employed. The uses of this medicine are as follows. Every year it is mixed with the first fruits in the ceremony of *luma*, which will be described later on. In war time the mbhulo is employed to " fence the country ". Envoys go to all the drifts on the boundary, take stones out of the river, smear them with the

magical powder and put them on the roads, at the crossways; should enemies invade the country, they will be deprived of their strength. The weapons also are sprinkled with a decoction made of this royal medicine, as we shall see, and it is given to the chief to prevent disease. The father of Papalati was accused of having sold some of this powerful national drug to the Pedi chief Sikororo, an act which amounted to high treason.

I have been fortunate enough to be informed of all the rites concerning the royal medicine in the Mazwaya clan. There, it is called *nyokwekulu*, a word which derives probably from the verb ku nyuka, to melt. Let us hear Mboza tell us, with awe and profound conviction, the marvels of this wonderful drug. He attended its preparation in the year 1893, before the war scattered the clan and destroyed its military power.

Each year the nyokwekulu is renewed. Its exact composition is known only to one man, Godlela, the royal magician and priest, to whom the care of preparing it is entrusted. This man belongs to the house, or sub-clan, of Tlhatlha. He is very much feared. Nobody dares to dispute with him and he has the right of cursing even the chief. His function is *hereditary*. His father Malubatilo was in charge of the nyokwekulu before him. The law of succession is this : when the elder brother dies, the position is held by his younger brother. The headmen of the tribe box his ears and say to him : "You will be the master of the medicine ! Take great care of it". When all the brothers are dead, it passes to the sons.

So, when the right time of the year has come, the chief consults the bones. The first thing to do is to send messengers all over the country to fetch a *forked branch*, a "shiphandje", to which the calabash containing the medicines will be hung. When they have chosen it — it must be the stem of a nkonono tree — they cut it and bring it back to the capital. In front walks the master of the work, Godlela, and behind him four men carrying the shiphandje. Those who accompany them have the right of entering the villages and stealing fowls. Woe to the people who meet with that troop ! They will be relieved

of all they carry, " because the forked branch of the great medicine of the chief is taboo ".

The sacred branch having duly reached the capital, Godlela proceeds to the second operation, the *burning of the drugs.* Mboza saw the magician take pieces of skin cut from buffaloes, lions, hyenas, elans, panthers, snakes of various kinds and, last but not least, from the bodies of men, enemies killed in the wars : a part of the skin of the forehead, the heart, the diaphragm, the nails, a finger, some ears... All these are roasted in a large pot. On some mats are spread various magical roots cut into small pieces which are also thrown into the pot. The chief and all the sub-chiefs approach and, with hollow reeds, inhale and swallow the vapour and the smoke which emanates from it. (1)

The preparation of the great medicine having been sucessfully accomplished, the great drum (nhumburi) of the capital was brought on the square and everybody danced, even women who took assagaies in their hands and sang: " We are thankful if we die (hi tlangela ku fa) " viz., " the country is in security, our invincible medicine is ready ! We shall not be killed by enemies but will die a natural death. " Before extinguishing the fire which was used to roast the medicines, Godlela takes a little water, pours it on the glowing embers and, when it vaporises with the accustomed sound, he emits the sacramental *tsu* and prays to his gods, the departed spirits of the Tlhatlha family, as doctors always do, in order to obtain their blessing on the nyokwekulu.

The royal drug, having been burnt, is reduced to powder and this powder poured into the calabashes. The forked branch is planted in the sacred hut, which I shall shortly describe, the calabashes hung upon it. Each sub-chief receives a calabash and takes it to his kraal where it will help the district in which he reigns

(1) The Hlewane sub-clan, which revolted many a time against the legal chief and which succeeded by its intrigues to provoke the war of 1894, after which it became the reigning family of Nondwane, used to abstain from participating in this " swallowing of the smoke " ; because, in former years, it had been defeated by Maphunga's people and some of its men killed ; their flesh had been used in the concoction of the nyokwekulu. So they feared to go and inhale the odour of their fellow clansmen.

to perform the *luma* ceremony. But the greater part of the powder remains at the capital. There it will be used not only for the luma, for the sprinkling of the warriors (See Chapter IV), but also for two other purposes: 1) for the protection of the country by means of the wooden pegs; 2) for the filling up of the magical horn.

1) *The wooden pegs* (timhiko). A certain day is fixed to plant the forked branch in the house where the great medicine is kept. Then the doctor, accompanied by some members of the royal family, steals out secretly during the night and goes to the cross-ways,.to the strategic points, on the borders of the Mazwaya territory. It is taboo for anyone to meet with the party. He plants wooden pegs, smears them with the powder. As soon as they have been smeared, they become invisible. Nobody can see them any more, nor tear them out except Godlela. They do not rot. White ants do not attack them. The country is fenced by them.

2) *The magical horn.* The remainder of the powder is mixed with a special kind of honey, the honey made by the small black bee called *mbonga*. This bee builds a large spherical nest deep in the ground. Natives have a number of superstitions regarding it. They say the mbonga honey may be eaten by anybody, but it is only members of certain families who can see the nest and dig for it For other people it is invisible. (See Part VI). The Ngwetsa family, in Rikatla, was one of the favoured ones! It must be said that the hole through which the mbonga bees penetrate into the soil is indeed very small and escapes the notice of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden, a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced through it. It is a great means of divination. When war is imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and it exsudes through the hole: "It knows all about war". So the country can prepare for it. No wonder if this powerful

medicine is kept with a superstitious awe and the greatest care.

A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth a perpetual fire burns; it must never be allowed to go out: it is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan must provide it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this fireplace which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let the fire go out, then Godlela must be called to light it again, rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The fire produced by burning that shrub is considered dangerous. It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose of warming oneself; the genitalia are said to swell when that law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear that: has he not his drugs to protect himself? He can and must use ntjopfa to relight the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning, produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn, on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the provision of the powder.

The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the nyokwekulu, had no sexual relations with the chief on that account. I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut: it was taboo. The grass of the roof of this hut must never be removed, though it may rot owing to the rains. It is taboo. One simply puts a layer of new grass over the old one, a thing which is rarely done in the case of ordinary roofs.

In case of war, should the clan be obliged to leave the country, a special little hut is hastily built in the bush and the precious medicine is deposited therein. No fear that the enemy will take it, neither Whites nor Natives, because this hut also has the attribute of invisibility. This happened during the war of

1894. (1) For the *mhamba* of the Tembe and Zihlahla clans it is different. The man who keeps it must run away with it and with the chief.

Such are the laws of the mphulo. This great medicine can certainly be considered as a part of the regalia and the most important part of them. It is, for the chief and sub-chiefs, a means of strengthening their authority, as will be seen in the description of the luma rite. On the other hand the mphulo is a collective property, the powerful magic means by which the clan resists its enemies or conquers them. It occupies the very centre of national life.

In some clans, chiefs possess *other personal charms* which are very much dreaded and called *psitjemba*. So, in the Maluleke clan, each of the children of the ancient chief Mashakadzi received from him one of these psitjemba. It consists of a part of the skull of a child, the top of the head, where the pulse is seen beating at the fontanella. This has been smeared with the vitreous humour taken from the eyes of lions or elephants, and powders made from the skins of wild beasts. The possession of this charm gives the chief a supernatural power. If, being irritated with you, he invokes his gods in sucking it and emits the sacramental tsu, he can call any wild beast he likes to kill you... He has sacrified with the psitjemba: you will die!

Some chiefs of the Northern clans used to *swallow one of the stones* found in the stomach of a crocodile. It is said that crocodiles, when cut open, are found to contain a certain number of stones, as they are supposed to eat one each year, when the rainy season comes on. One of them is chosen and smeared with special medicines and swallowed by the chief. Natives firmly believe that this stone remains in the body of the chief, and that it is " his head, his life " (Viguet). When it passes in his stools a first time, it is a premonitory warning. When a second time, it is a clear announcement that the chief is going to die. So chiefs can always know when their time is near.

(1) In the Nondwane, the nyokwekulu is still kept by the heir of Maphunga, Magomanyana. The new chief, the usurper, tried to find it, but Godlela refused to give it to him. Thus Mubvesha has no *mphulo*.

In other clans the crocodile stone is replaced by what is called *ndjalama*. Amongst Nkuna this word designates a kind of bright copper button, which the Pedi of the Palaora mine used to make and sell. But ndjalama also means large sized beads. Whatever it is, some chiefs swallowed the ndjalama and were warned by it of their death. This object, as well as the crocodile stone, is taboo for subjects to swallow. They would die. It is " buloyi bya hosi " — " the magical power of the chief. "

On account of these powerful and dangerous charms possessed by them, chiefs of different clans considered it as a taboo to stay in each other's company ; they were afraid lest they might be killed by the magical power of their colleagues. Maphunga seems to have been particularly feared. He had even bought poison from White people and is said to have killed his rival, Musongi, chief of the Maputju clan, with whom he fought the battle of Malangotiba in 1870. He sent a woman of bad life to Maputju. The woman succeeded in winning the confidence of the king and poured this poison into his glass. Nowadays the Ronga chiefs have been taught by the Authorities to sit in council when discussing matters.

The two principal prerogatives of the chief are the right of *luma* and taxation.

III. *The right of luma, and the first fruits rites.*

We come to a set of rites which might be treated when considering the Agricultural life. I prefer describing them here, as they provide us with a typical illustration of the constitution of the clan ; they are highly characteristic of the Bantu community, a community which is essentially agricultural in its pursuits, animistic in its beliefs, and hierachic as regards its social and national life.

We have already met with the word *luma* and noticed that its ordinary meaning is *to bite ;* its ritual sense is to *remove the injurious character of a given food by a certain ceremony*. The luma is a necessity before eating the flesh of certain wild beasts, as we

shall see when studying the laws of hunting (See Part IV). But it is of still more importance, and one of the great laws of the clan, that the official luma shall take place before the subjects eat the products of the new year. There seem to be two ideas at the basis of this strange taboo :

1) To eat certain kinds of food is dangerous for one's health, and the first mouthful you take must be seasoned with the royal drug.

2) The gods, the chief, the elder brothers have a prior right of enjoying the products of the soil. To precede them in doing it is a sin which would bring them misfortune. The hierarchy must be absolutely respected.

The law of luma seems to have applied to all kinds of food in former times. Nowadays it is not observed for the following products : maize, Kafir beans and peas, rice, sorghum, water melons (makalabatla) and monkey nuts. It is partly observed for the mafureira almonds (tihuhlu), the strychnos paste (fuma) and the pumpkin leaves (magawane). It is strongly enforced for the black Kafir corn and the bukanye. Such is at any rate the case in the four clans of Nondwane, Mabota, Nwamba and Tembe. Amongst Zulu and Swazi, on the contrary, I have been told people luma maize and do not luma kafir corn. Kafir corn is probably the most ancient cereal amongst the Ba-Thonga, and bukanye always existed in the country. This is perhaps the reason why these luma rites, which bear a very old character, are still applied to these products to the exclusion of other more modern cereals.

I. *The luma without religious act.*

Let us first study the less ritualistic kind of luma, the luma of the *mafureira almond*, for instance. It is practised in each sub-chief's village, and, though it tends to become obsolete, it is still enforced by some " tihosana ". So my neighbour in Rikatla, Habele, hosana placed by Mobvesha over this part of the territory, met some time ago a boy who was eating these almonds, the description of which I shall give later on. —

" Who gave them to you ? " asked Habele... The child kept silent. — " Come with me to your parents ! " Having found their home, the sub-chief scolded them severely : " You have started sucking (munya) the almonds before us. You wanted to kill my head ? Pay a fine ! " They answered : " It is the birds which have made them fall from the tree... The children were not guilty ! " However they had to pay 500 reis.

The luma of almonds, which takes place in December, when they are ripe, is performed in the following way. The almonds are dipped into a small calabash full of water to soften them. Some of the powder of the nyokwekulu is added to them. The headman first takes some for himself and then distributes them to his people. They suck the almonds, take in their hands the part which is not eaten, and rub their faces with it. But there is *no religious act performed*. It is the same for ther *fuma*, a paste made with the contents of the kwakwa fruit, a kind of Strychnos very similar to the nsala, but of a different taste. The ceremony was even more simple than with the almonds : the chief used to send a little of this paste to each village saying : " Let this be the first bite you swallow : new year has come " ! (Luman, ku tlhese nguba). No powder was used in connexion with it. The magical drug was used, on the other hand, when the luma of the pumkin leaves took place.

II. *The luma of the Kafir corn.*

The great, the official luma, amongst the Ronga clans, is the one performed for the Kafir corn (mabele). The great wife of the chief grinds the first grains of Kafir corn reaped in the fields. She cooks the flour in a pot and pours into it some of the royal powder kept in the calabash, so as to make a *shimbimbi* (See page 40). The chief takes a little of the food and offers it to the spirits of his ancestors, at the main entrance of the royal kraal. He prays to them in the following terms : " Here has the new year come ! Precede us, you gods, and luma, so that, for us also, Kafir corn shall help our body, that we may become fat, not thin, that the witches may increase the corn,

make it to be plentiful, so that, even if there is only a small field, big baskets may be filled ! (Nguba hi yoleyi ! Rangan ñwine, mi luma, ñwi Psikwembu ! Na hine, mabele ma tjhama amirin yeru psinene, hi kuluka hi nga wondji. Abaloyi ba yandjisa, psi tala ngòpfu, nambi shi shisiñwanyana shi shiñwe, a ku tale tingula !) "

After this religious act everyone luma in turn, the chief first, then the sub-chiefs, then the counsellors, then the warriors who have killed enemies in battle, then the headmen of the kraals who have all been summoned to the capital. Should one of the headmen be prevented from coming by illness, his younger brother will not precede him. He will bring him the *shimbimbi* in a leaf; the elder will take it, and, after him, the other brothers. Women do not eat the magic powder. Neither do strangers, even those who are settled amongst the clan. They have their own medicine and luma for themselves, though they must not do it before the chief of the country.

III. *The luma of bukanye and the great national feast.*

The most characteristic of all these ceremonies concerning the first fruits is the luma of bukanyi. Tobane has given me a circumstantial description of this feast and it deserves to be reproduced in all its details, as being a typical manifestation of Bantu national life.

The *nkanye* (1) is a large tree, one of the most handsome in the country. Its botanical name is Sclerocarya caffra (Sond); it is vulgarly known amongst the English of Natal as the Kafir plum.

It bears fruit of the size of a prune Reine-Claude, which, when ripe is a beautiful golden yellow and has a strong flavour of turpentine and a penetrating odour. It is a dioecian tree, the male bearing bunches of flowers while the female has single flowers.

(1) Nkanye, plural minkanye, is the tree in question. Kanye, plural makanye, is the fruit of this tree ; bukanye is the drink made from this fruit. In the same way the wild apricot tree is called mphimbi, plurial mimphimbi. The fruit himbi, plural mahimbi ; the drink made from the fruit, buhimbi.

The Natives are quite aware of this; they cut down the male plants but take care to keep a few in each district to fecundate

The " Nkanye " of Rikatla (16 miles North of Lourenço-Marques). *Phot. P. Berthoud.*

the female. The fruit — the kanye — begins to ripen in the month of January and falls to the ground. The odour is per-

ceptible everywhere, and it is then that the principal men of the country approach the chief and say to him : " The time has come to luma. "

In the luma of the bukanye it is easy to discover four consecutive acts :

a) The luma of the gods and of the chief.

The first ripe makanye are gathered and pressed at the capital, and the sour liquor thus obtained is poured out on the tomb of the deceased chiefs in the sacred wood ; they are invoked to bless this new year and the feast which is about to be celebrated. Nkolele, the sub-chief of Libombo, used on this occasion to pronounce the following prayer : " This is the new year Let us not kill each other ! Let us eat peacefully ! (Hi yo nguba ! Hi nga dlayane ! A hi nwenen ha hombe !)" Here is another formula : " May this bukanyi do no harm ! May we not slay each other under its influence. May it cause no serious quarrels. " They are afraid that, during the general intoxication which will shortly prevail, quarrels will arise, some of which may terminate fatally. During the whole month of bukanye drinking, all business is at a standstill, just as with us all proceedings in bankruptcy and all prosecutions for debt are held in abeyance for two weeks during the New Year holidays!

The gods having luma first, the bones are consulted. Should the throw be propitious, the chief will luma next ; thus is the opening act of the feast concluded.

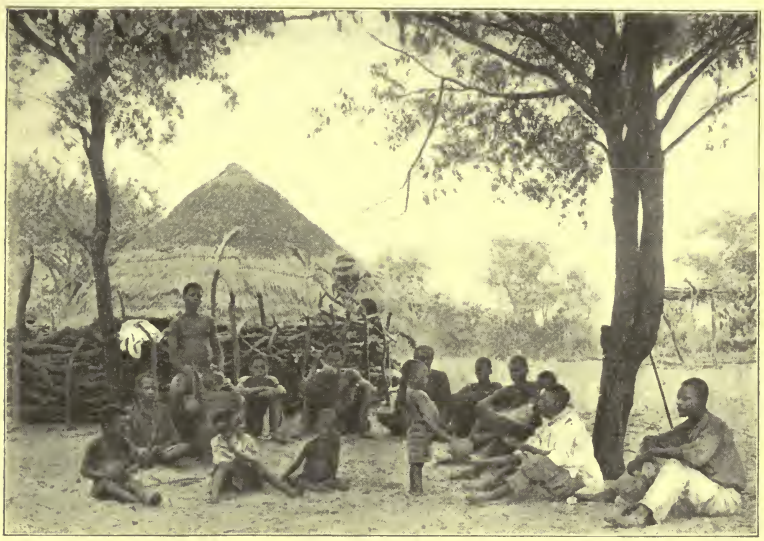
b) The luma of the army.

The young people are now assembled to clean up the public square and all the roads : the ball room must be prepared ! The women of the capital start out early in the morning, beating the *psibubutuana,* that is to say sounding the call that is produced by striking the lips (bu-bu-bu-bu), and they go all over the country gathering the golden fruit : this is piled up in an enormous heap on the public square and the brew is proceeded with in the following manner : the makanye are pierced (tshunya) with a pointed wooden splinter ; the stone falls covered with a

transparent white pulp into the jar ; into this jar is also squeezed out with the fingers all the juice which remains in the pulp adhering to the skin ; this is continued until the jar is half full, when the stones are taken out and on the following day the pressing is resumed until the jar is full. On the third day the beer has sufficiently fermented to be pungent and agreeable to the taste and it is ready for consumption. Empty barrels are easily procurable in the environs of Lourenço Marques. The women of the capital brew ten or fifteen huge casks of the precious liquor ! This accomplished, the second act commences.

A convocation of the entire male portion of the tribe is held at the capital, but the first to respond to the call must be the men, the warriors of the army, who come in full array, with all their ornaments, and carrying their small play shields. One cask of beer is selected, into which is thrown the black powder, the great medicine of the land, called in this case *buhlungu bya miluru*, the powder of the miluru. The nuru, plur. miluru, is the mysterious spiritual influence which a man or a beast killed by the assagais can exert on the slayer, making him lose his head and commit acts of folly, or, at least, have red eyes (shenga mahlo). We shall again meet with this curious conception when studying the rites of the army and of hunting. All those who are gloriously conscious of having killed a man in war must first drink the new beer which has been medicated to keep them from killing any of their compatriots during the ensuing weeks of the bukanye. They approach one after the other, the chief also, if he be a man slayer. Each of them receives a small calabash, (ntcheko, p. 48) full of the fermented liquid. He jumps and runs in the direction of the entrance, drinks a mouthful, spits it out with *tsu* and says : " Father and mother ! May I live ! May I hold the calabash ! Even to morrow ! For ever ! " People laugh. He is so happy ! Others sing and dance the war dance : " We drink the bukanye anew ! Who would have thought that we should drink again in this cup," viz., "that we should have escaped all the dangers of war " (Hi nwa nkanyi lomu'mpsa ! Afa hi nga hlayi epsaku hi ta nwa ntcheko lo kambe).

After this, the casks are distributed to the other warriors who drink to their hearts' content. The addition of the black powder is not absolutely necessary for them. They can luma without it. Then the war circle is formed and the principal counsellors harangue the assembled warriors, giving them the following advice : " Drink in peace (ha hombe). Let no one spoil this



Bukanye drinking near Antioka. (Portuguese East Africa.) *Phot. A. Borel.*

bukanye by transfixing his brother with his assagai. Go and drink in your villages. Do not pick quarrels with strangers passing through the country, etc. " The gathering then disperses.

c) The luma in the village.

The preparatory luma is accomplished. The *yila* has been removed. Now comes the third act : the drinking in the villages.

The women who remained at home while the men-slayers went to luma at the bidding of the chief, have gathered large quantities of makanye. The tree is to be found wide-spread all over the country, as no female plant is ever cut down :

there is one or more in every field, and every one possesses such a tree, as every one owns a field ; when all the trees in the gardens have been denuded of fruit, the women pass to the trees growing in the bush far from the villages.

But here also everything must be done in right order of precedence ; the petty chief of such district must commence to luma in the presence of his subjects, and not until after he has so done can the people drink freely in the villages. From this moment, however, there is no further restriction. Drinking continues day and night, night and day ! When the supply is finished in one village, they go to the next. These feasts are the saturnalia, the bacchanalia, the carnival of the tribe ! During these weeks some individuals are in a continuous state of semi-intoxication. Orgies on all sides, songs and dances ! The younger men run along the paths, with a more or less unsteady gait, brandishing sticks with pieces of red cloth attached as pennants. They are in search of full barrels ! It must be said that the inebriety produced by the bukanye is of a somewhat mild type, as this native beer contains very little alcohol ; but the quantity absorbed is so enormous that it finishes by going to the head : this is more especially so with the bukanye brewed from a species of nkanye called *nunge*, which appears to be stronger and more intoxicating.

How far does the sexual licence go during the bukanye ! Not to a general promiscuity as amongst the Ba-Pedi after the circumcision school. However many cases of adultery occur. Men and women forget the elementary rules of behaviour. They make water in the same places, or even more than that, which is taboo under ordinary circumstances : " Nau a wa ha tiyi ", — " the law is no longer in force. "

Still, in the midst of all this carnival, the payment of the tax must not be forgotten... This is the time to carry to the chief the liquor which is flowing so freely on all sides but of which he claims the lion's share. Each petty chief sends his people to the capital with brimming jars. This is termed " lumisa hosi ", supplying the chief with new wine. The women do not enter the capital at once, but go to one of the counsellors who

promptly abstracts a couple of jars for his own use. The chief returns one or two jars to the carriers, as they have come a long way and are doubtless thirsty; the remainder will be kept to refresh the very numerous guests at the Court: any coming from afar will spend the night and not return until the next day. I have seen a company of these women carrying baskets full of makanye to Muzila. How graceful was the the Indian file winding its way along the path and singing, amongst others, the following chorus: (See for further particulars *Chants et Contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 47).

Chwe! Chwe! Hi laba shimungu — Leshi ka — Le tilwen!
Chwe! Cwhe! Shimungu hi mani? — Hi Mzila! — Hi Mzila!
Hi! Hi! We seek the hawk! — Who soars – In the sky!
Hi! Hi! Who is the hawk? — It is Mzila! — It is Mzila!

There is quite a collection of these carriers' songs praising the chiefs. Mzila (or Muzila), whom we saw a short time ago scaring sparrows, is here compared to the mythical lightning bird, to the hawk that swoops down from the clouds. (See Part VI). Why does he not once for all annihilate the sparrows which pillage his fields of sorghum? But this is poetry! and there is often a wide gap between poetry and reality!

d) The feasting of the chief in the villages.

The fourth and final act of the bukanye feasting in which, as we have seen, the chief plays a prominent part, is the *nsungi* which I may call the " fin de saison " orgy! The chief now returns his subjects visits and casks of beer are prepared for him in every village. Dancing and singing are in full swing. He is fêted and acclaimed! But the makanye are getting over-ripe: a new month, a new moon is at hand, which is called *sibandlela* " she who closes the roads " : the paths leading to the foot of the trees become almost impassable, owing to the grass which grows to an almost incredible height during the rains prevailing at this season. The fine weather is over. Winter is knocking at the door.

Amongst the Nkuna the luma ceremony called " to eat the

new year" (dyaka nwaka) is performed with a special pumpkin (kwembe) cooked at the capital together with the medicine used for rain-making. The chief first eats of it in the evening and makes the sign of a cross on the big drum, which is then beaten to call the people in his village. Then all the men come, bringing the little horns in which they keep the rain medicine (See Part VI). They eat a little and smear the orifice of these horns with the medicine : the horns also must " eat the new year ". Then everybody can enjoy the products of the harvest. Should anybody precede the chief, this would be fatal to the latter or make him ill... Such is the testimony of Mankhelu. I suspect these rites to have been influenced by the proximity of the Ba-Pedi. "Now we have no longer any first fruits' feast (mulumo)", says Mankhelu with some melancholy. " White people have killed it. Everybody eats freely in his house according to his good pleasure. Formerly we used to take the oxen of the man who had dared to steal the new year ".

Conclusion on the Luma Rite.

All these luma rites of first fruits seem to have primarily a *religious origin*. The Bantu do not think they dare enjoy the products of the soil if they have not first given a portion of them to their gods. Are these gods not those who make cereals grow ? Have they not the power even of controlling the wizards who bewitch the fields ? These rites are also evidently dictated by the *sense of hierarchy*. A subject must not precede his chief nor a younger brother his elder one in the use of the new harvest, else they would kill those in authority. Such an act is against order. We shall see that, even when the seeds are sown, the elders must take precedence. But the custom seems also to have been actuated by the idea of *passage*. There is a passage from one year to another. For the Thonga, I think the new year begins twice every year : it begins when tilling recommences, in July, August, when the heat returns. This is the hlobo. It begins a second time at harvest and then there is passage from the food of the last year to the food of this year. This is the nguba (Ro.) or nwaka (Dj.). Though the luma rites do not bear all the characters of a true passage rite, similar to those of circumcision or moving, we can notice in the luma of bukanye a kind of marginal period of general licence, when

the ordinary laws are more or less suspended. The taking of a first mouthful probably signifies the aggregation to the new period, the magical powder used on this occasion being a protective which must shield from the calamities of this unknown year... And after all, is it not this feeling of fear which so easily takes possession of the heart of man, when entering a new condition and starting something new, which has led the savage to surround the use of the first fruit with so many ritual precautions ?

IV. *Taxation*

The chief governs (fuma). *Fuma* means to command, but also to live in plenty, to be rich. The subject (nandja, follower) obeys; he follows the chief who marches before him just the same as the wife in the path follows her husband who walks at his ease, with his stick in his hand, whilst she carries his belongings in her basket on her head... If the prerogative of the chief is to live in abundance, the duty of the subject is to pay taxes! This duty is expressed by the word *luba* (Dj.), *hlenga* (Ro.). It is so true that this is the principal function of the subject that, when a man leaves his clan and goes to live in another clan, he comes to the chief and says : " I want to *luba* or *nkonza*, (word borrowed by the Ronga from the Zulu), to pay the tax"... This is the proper way of making his submission.

The explanation of the rites of the first fruits throws much light on the conception of the Bantu regarding the chief's position in respect to his subjects. For them he is certainly endowed with the divine right more fully than the King or the Kaiser in any European country; he is the *son* of the gods, not only their protegé... The gods are the lords of everything... He shares this lordship with them. Hence his right of taxing his subjects. On the other hand we saw that he is the *soil*! He is more that Lewis XIV who could say : " L'Etat c'est moi ! " The Bantu chief can say : " The earth it is I! — Le sol c'est moi ! " Hence, on the part of the subjects, the duty of sharing with him the products of the soil and also of their hunting.

The Thonga chief taxes his subjects in four different ways: he takes a regular portion of the harvest; he claims a part of most of the wild beasts killed; he makes his people work for him; he taxes also the revenue of those who go away to work for White folks. A fifth source of revenue for him is found in the fines imposed in judicial cases.

1. As regards *taxation of the products of the soil*, it consists in a basket (shihundju) of mealies contributed by each village at harvest time. This is the regular taxation. Moreover those who brew a great quantity of beer for a feast always send some jars to the chief, especially when the season of tilling the fields or threshing the grain has come. This is not a regular tax, at least amongst the Ba-Ronga, and is considered as *mashobo*, an act of civility, and not as hlenga proper. Bukanye must be brought to the capital in great quantities during the great national feast. In the Northern clans it seems that these payments in kind called *shirwalo* (carrying of beer, from ku rwala, to carry), are expected from all those who are not hunters and bring no meat to the capital.

2. The right of the chief *over wild beasts killed in hunting* is not the same on all game. Rhinoceros is not taxed; it is even taboo to bring its meat to the chief. On the contrary when a man has killed a wild buffalo, an elan, a giraffe or an antelope, he must first cut some joints for the chief. If it is a panther or a lion, he must abandon the skin; if an elephant, the tusk which scratched the soil when it fell belongs to the chief: it is "the tusk of the soil", and the chief is "the soil." The other tusk is for the hunter (ndlayi). In the Maputju country, it was even forbidden to kill elephants. Ngwanazi, the chief who was deported in 1896, had reserved the monopoly of elephant hunting to himself and to his warriors. The hippopotamus is taxed more heavily than any other beast. The hunter who has succeeded in killing one has not the right of cutting it open. Should he do so, it would be considered a serious offence. He may be put to death. (Mankhelu). He must at once send word to the capital and the men of the Court will come immediately and cut up the animal, taking half the joints to the chief.

As for the crocodile, it must also be opened by the men of the Court, because it contains many things such as marvellous stones used in magic, and bracelets of the women whom it has devoured. The chief appropriates what he pleases amongst those objects.

3. *Statute labour* is one of the main revenues of the royal kraal. In some cases, subjects must come to the capital, led by their sub-chiefs, and till a field for the chief or rather for the queen who has been bought with the nation's money. In Nondwane, which is a large country, each of the sub-clans must till a field for the wives of the chief in its own territory. For instance, in each of the districts of Mapulangu, Bandi, Manuel, Maghebeza, Malwan, Hlangunyingin, the chief Mubvesha possessed a royal field which his subjects weed and harvest every year, and the sub-chief Habele, who is in charge of those districts, had to gather the mealies and carry them to the capital. This official tilling is done under the form of a *djimo*. (See Part IV). Moreover the young men are always at the disposal of the chief to clean his public square, build his huts, repair the thatched roofs of the royal kraal and organise hunting expeditions for him.

4. But the greater part of the royal revenue consists now in *money* which the chiefs receives from his subjects. Mubvesha taxes each village a sum of 500 reis besides the regular basket of mealies. At the end of the bukanye feast, each village must send him another 500 reis to notify him that the feast is ended. When a young man returns from Johannesburg having made enough money to lobola a wife, he must leave £ 1.10.0 in the hands of the chief. The latter also recruits boys whom he sends to the recruiting agents, getting as much as £ 1, or £ 1.10.0 per head. When a sub-chief dies, his people inform the paramount chief of his death bringing a sum of money (1500 reis). The chief, however, does not receive any portion of the inheritance, in case of death. There is no taxation on the succession.

5. A great deal of money comes into the hand's of the chief *owing to fines which he imposes* when acting as supreme judge. When a plaintiff brings a case and the culprit is condemned to pay

him £ 25, Mubvesha keeps £ 10 for himself; he retains £ 5 if the fine be £ 10.

Sub-chiefs do not tax their subjects as a rule. They must bring to their superior all the products of taxation. They do not "eat" anything. But in some cases the chief gives them a part of it. Thus Habele, sub-chief of Rikatla, used to "eat" half of the taxes brought to him by young men coming back from Johannesburg.

V. *Dangers and difficulties of the Chieftainship.*

Endowed with supernatural power which he owes to his magical medicines, feared and sometimes loved by his subjects, having plenty to eat and being richer than any of his people who readily consent to be taxed, the chief occupies an enviable position. The chieftainship (buhosi), therefore, is very much sought after and no one refuses to be a chief. Thonga tales telling the story of some one who succeeded wonderfully in life, often conclude by saying that this person was given a territory and became a chief... which seems to be the highest reward for virtue or wisdom. Nowadays, however, one may meet with cases where the heir to the chieftainship, having become a Christian, renounces that high position because he feels that there is an incompatibility between the Bantu way of ruling and his new faith.

But it would be a great error to think that a Thonga chief is, or can be, an autocratic despot. This may have been the case with Chaka, Lobengula or Gungunyane, when the tribe became an amalgamation of clans held together by a military power: in order to maintain their usurped authority, those chiefs had to be cruel despots. But this is a late development in the Bantu political system. I am only now taking into consideration the primitive form of tribal life, which is the clan life.

For a chief dangers may arise from three sources: from his own character, from the Thonga system of government itself and from the law of succession.

1) The character of the chief.

A chief who wants to succeed in his government *must have a good character*. If he imposes taxation, he must not use his wealth in a selfish way. For instance when women bring him a *shirwalo* of a dozen pots of beer, he must give them back one or two to quench their thirst. Moreover he must distribute most of the remaining pots to his men, who are on the bandla, always ready to share with him the advantages of his position.

Should he buy oxen with the product of the fines, he will be wise in slaughtering one from time to time for his counsellors and for the whole clan. A chief who is good (a ni tintsalu) is said to *maintain* or to *save the country* (bekisa tiko). If he does not do that, he is severely criticised. Mubvesha who used all his money to buy wives, who prevented all the men from seeing them, whilst he himself was too old to suffice them, was considered a bad chief. He did not even allow "bandla", viz, the gathering of men in the capital, because he was full of jealousy (mona). If he had not been placed in the chieftainship and supported by the White Government, he might have been deposed. Cases in which a chief has been deprived of his right and replaced by another man are not wanting. (1) I have even

(1) The annals of the Nkuna tribe provide an instance of the deposal not only of a certain chief but of the elder branch of the royal family, owing to an act which hurt the human feelings of the clan. We have already met with the name of Shithlelana, son of Nkuna who lived at least 300 years ago. His principal wife was Nwahubyana. In his old age he was very ill; this woman fearing less he should die in her hut, drove him away; he was obliged to take a refuge in the hut of another of his wives, Nwantimba, mother of Rinono, and died there. Then the headmen assembled and said: "As Nwahubyana has driven away her husband from her hut, she has also driven away the chieftainship from her son. He shall not reign. Rinono shall reign because he is the son of the woman who took care of the sick chief." This story, where we see the sacred law of succession transgressed for a moral reason, is most interesting because it provides a good illustration of the conception of the clan regarding chieftainship and it proves that, even in ancient times, a feeling of humanity could have more weight with the tribe than an article of the royal code.

heard of a chief in the Shiridja clan who was put to death. Deposal is generally proclaimed by a council of the royal family.

To reign over a Bantu clan requires much tact, ability and patience. The chief must be a father to his people and not a tyrant. (1)

2) The system of government.

In order to keep in touch with his subjects, a chief generally places his wives in the various provinces of his little kingdom and he pays them regular visits, staying some days in those secondary capitals.

But a more effective way of holding the country is to place his son or his near relatives as sub-chiefs in all these districts. Should a son be still young, the chief will send along with him a trustworthy counsellor to watch over him. Thus, when he dies, and when the elder son is called to the succession, the new chief will have his brothers as co-chiefs or sub-chiefs. Should they be ambitious, should they have acquired some power during the last years of their father's government, they may refuse to obey and proclaim themselves independent. This has happened many times amongst the Ronga. Let me shortly recapitulate the three instances already mentioned: — In the Tembe

(1) Two nice Thonga riddles illustrate this disposition to criticise chiefs: The first riddle enigmatically describes the characteristics of an unworthy chief; it comes from the banks of the Limpopo:

Bupsa ga shisule. — Hosi leyi i ni mona...
Some cyclamen flour. — This chief is full of hatred...

The shisule — a word which I translate by cyclamen — is a plant which grows on the ant-hills, bearing large tubercles; these can be cooked and ground into flour; but it is only good in appearance, the taste is unpleasant and nauseating. This chief is bad! He is like that flour! Corruptio optimi pessima!

Here is another riddle which holds the chiefs up to ridicule somewhat wittily:

Tinsindji tibiri ti rendjeleka tchuka. — Tihosi tibiri ti hleba nandja.
Two mice chase one another round an ant-hill (They will never meet) — Two chiefs malign a subject. (They will also never meet, i. e. agree).

Each wants to have the last word and will therefore depreciate the arguments of his opponent. He will seek to disprove the statements of the other chief, making fresh ones which the latter will seek to refute in his turn!

kingdom Maputju, who "ate the foreleg", made himself king of the greater part of the terrority. The separated brothers became fierce enemies and often fought against each other, all the more as Tembe greatly resented the revolt of Maputju, and Maputju knew he had not been fair to his elder brother (p. 299). The same thing happened when Matjolo became independent from Mpfumo, his elder brother; both were sons of Nhlaruti. The origin of the war of 1894-1896 was the same: Mubvesha, belonging to the Hlewana branch of the Mazwaya family, wanted to become independent .. even to take the chieftainship from the elder branch to which Maphunga and his successor Mahazule belonged.

So the Thonga clan has a tendency to fall to pieces, just as the Thonga village, and it requires a good deal of firmness and diplomacy on the part of a chief to keep his kingdom intact.

3) The law of succession.

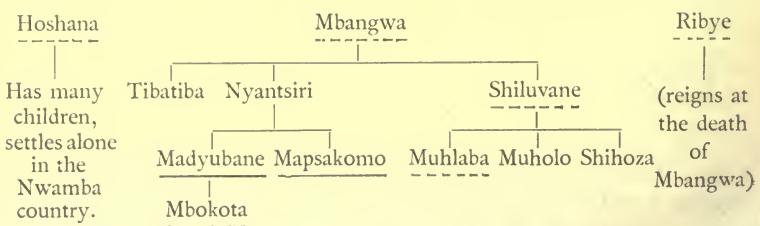
Its main provision is this: when a chief dies, his elder son is the regular heir, but all his younger brothers must reign before the son, the true heir, is crowned. This system tries to reconcile two principles which we have already met with as ruling the family life: 1) the absolute preeminent right of the elder branch, 2) the community of property amongst brothers. But if they can be reconciled in ordinary life, these two principles become antagonistic when transported into politics, and this law of succession has been the source of endless disturbances amongst the Thonga clans. It is true that the younger brothers of the chief, when taking his place, are considered more or less as princes regent, holding office on behalf of their nephew, who is the lawful heir to the throne. They are said to "make him grow" (kurisa) to "keep his tumbler" (hlayisa ndyelo).

But if the former chief died in his youth, and if his younger brother has lived and reigned for a long time, and has become very popular, he is very much tempted to appropriate the chieftainship for his own family and to order the tribe to crown

his son, to the exclusion of the son of the first chief, who belonged to the elder branch, but who has been more or less forgotten during all these years. This leads to conflicts and fighting. The lawful heir will contest (*banga*, a Zulu word) and a *mubango* (civil war) will follow. Or, if he is not able to fight, he will keep to himself, full of bitterness, and ready to seize the first opportunity of asserting his rights.

Such an usurpation has taken place twice in the Nkuna tribe. It is not easy to know exactly what happened, because there are conflicting statements. Those who hold the chieftainship do not tell the story in the same way as those who consider themselves as having been robbed of their right. This is the testimony of one of the latter, Mbokota, son of Madjubane. There were three brothers, Hoshana, Mbangwa and Ribye.(1) During the disturbances caused by the Ngoni invasion, Hoshana fled to the Nwamba country and lost touch with the main body of the clan which settled in the Transvaal. He however possessed the *ritlatla* (p. 359). At his death the royal apanage was brought to Shiluvane, but it never went back to Hoshana's children who lost their right for ever. Mbangwa had three children : a daughter, Tibatiba, and two sons, Nyantsiri and Shiluvane. At his death, his younger brother Ribye reigned. He died and then the chieftainship came back to Mbangwa's children. In the meantime Nyantsiri had died, but he had left two children, Madyubane and Mapsakomo. Madyubane, the elder one, was still a child. So Tibatiba, the elder sister, said to Shiluvane : "Take

(1) *Genealogy of the Nkuna family showing why and how contests arose for the succession.*



The names of the chiefs who reigned are thus underlined ------
Those of those who were deprived of the chieftainship, thus ——————

the elephant tusk belonging to the Nkuna Royal Family and reign in the place of Nyantsiri; but you have only to "keep the tumbler" of Madyubane". Shiluvane sold the tusk and bought wives, beads and clothing for himself. Madyubane died some years later; but he had a younger brother, Mapsakomo, and moreover a son called Mbokota. The chieftainship ought certainly to have returned to the elder branch. Mbokota told me himself that Shiluvane, before dying, had ordered his counsellors to proclaim him as chief. So, at Shiluvane's death, a great contest arose. The headmen came to the capital and asked which son of Shiluvane had been designated by the late chief as his successor. No one dared reply because there were four men who claimed the chieftainship : Mapsakomo, a younger brother of the legal heir Madyubane, Mbokota the son of Madyubane, Muhlaba and Muholo, both sons of Shiluvane. The great counsellor Shikhibane then said : "I heard Shiluvane say he wanted Muhlaba to reign". The headmen accepted this statement, but the other pretenders greatly resented it. Seeing that many Ba-Nkuna were opposed to Muhlaba, Shikhibane assembled the whole tribe in arms to proclaim his protégé. He wanted the army itself to manifest its will. Mbokota, Mapsakomo and Muholo protested. But the warriors took Muhlaba, who was still a young man, and brought him to his new residence all through the country in an epic march during which they sang the war songs. The contest was finally settled by the Boer Authorities ; Captain Dahl, then Native Commissioner for Zoutpansberg, confirmed the choice of Muhlaba. The Pedi queen Magayibia, of the Nyarin clan, asserted also that she had heard Shiluvane designate this young man as his successor, and the other pretenders were obliged to keep quiet. But they remained very discontended. (1)

(1) I remember, paying one day a visit to Mbokota, hearing him complain bitterly about his fate. He had tried to show his independence by establishing a separate circumcision school for his people so that they should not go to the "sungi" of Muhlaba. The chief did not prevent him from doing this, but he had just sent a messenger to claim the fees paid by the boys. Mbokota was much grieved at being obliged to remit them... and, if he had

I have seen another similar case of the elder branch losing its right on account of a younger brother placing his son on the throne, to the exclusion of the legal heir. It happened amongst the Baloyi who took refuge in the Mudjadji country. The sons of Nkami, younger brother of Shitshabe, tried to seize the chieftainship to the detriment of Munyamana, son of Shitshabe, and this gave rise to a war in consequence of which, however, Munyamana regained his right. (See S. A. A. A. S. Report of the Meeting of 1905. Vol. III, page 251).

All these facts tend to show that the position of the chief is attended with many dangers and difficulties, without mentioning those which arise from the presence of the White Government with which I shall deal later on.

So it must be recognised that the Tlonga have not been able to discover a political system guaranteeing the peace of the country in a satisfactory way. The habit of dividing the power between brothers who soon become rivals, that of allowing the younger brothers to reign before the legal heir, both these customs tend to destroy the unity of the clan and give rise to quarrels and unrest. Another bad consequence of these features of the royal right is this : a chief, when he ascends the throne, will do his best to *get rid of troublesome brothers* in order to reign alone and to ensure the chieftainship to his son. This often happened, especially in the case of Maphunga, chief of Nondwane, who killed as many as four brothers or near relations : Sitjobela, Nwanambalana, Zulu and Gigiseka. The last named was very courageous and the cunning Maphunga succeeded in poisoning him treacherously, through the agency of a dissolute woman.

enough men, he would certainly have revolted. But he had but a handful of warriors. He was not popular amongst the tribe ; so he did not think it wise to "banga" and eventually submitted to Muhlaba.

E. DEATH

When a chief has grown very old, he no longer comes out of the royal hut. His counsellors take his place in the management of affairs and he dies surrounded by mystery. It must be so, as his death must remain unknown during a whole year. " We reap and we bow down (korama) " viz. " we till the ground and reap again before the event is made public (palusha) " says Mankhelu.

So the chief is buried during the night ; no lamentations are heard ; his wives and his grave-diggers undergo the purification ceremonies and take the vapour baths in secret. It may be that the wives who dwell in remote places will not hear a word of their husband's death. The fire of the royal hut will not be kindled in the usual and ritual way, but it will be kept burning the whole year. The decease is formally announced to some few individuals, to the White Government officials, to the heir (who views the corpse), to the counsellors, but the rest of the country is supposed to be in ignorance of the occurrence. Of course the secret will not be kept absolutely. The truth will leak out... But no one will dare to speak openly on the subject. (1) A special hut is set apart into which the counsellors enter under pretext of discussing matters of state with the chief, who is said to be very ill and unable to show himself. As a matter of fact, he has been for some time buried.

(1) I was staying at Nondwane when Mapunga, the chief who preceeded Mahazule, died, and I heard on several occasions, in June ard July 1891, the warriors practising on their antelope horns the airs to be played when the mourning would be made public. The death must have occurred during 1890, but nothing was said about it. After the news had been published, Manganyele, a young heathen of the district of Libombo, remarked to me one day: " When last season (about Xmas 1890) we saw the miphimbi (trees bearing fruit similar to an apricot) so heavily laden with fruit, (there had been an exceptionally heavy crop), we felt sure the chief must have died and that he had sent us this plentiful supply... " A typical remark, aptly illustrating the semi-ignorance in which the tribe is kept on the death of the chief.

What is the reason for this silence? According to the old men I consulted, it is to prevent enemies taking advantage of the confusion consequent on the death of the chief to attack the country. Undoubtedly this custom is also intended to give the principal counsellors time to prepare for the installation of the new chief and to prevent bloody contests.

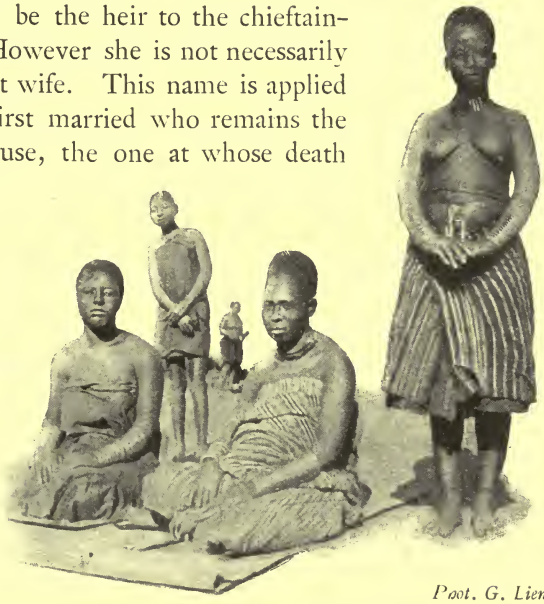
The grave of the chief does not differ from those of the subjects. Having been dug secretely in the sacred wood (ntimu), its whereabouts are not known by most of the people. In some clans or sub-clans the earth of the tumulus is levelled, so that no sign whatever remains to show where the body has been buried. This is said to be done in order to prevent enemies from exhuming the corpse and cutting off its ears, its diaphragm and other parts of the body to make powerful war-charms (See Chapter IV). The graves of the chiefs of Nondwane are said to be invisible, just the same as the hut of the nyokwekulu. They are known by Magomanyana alone (Mboza). (Magomanyana is the nearest relative of the late Maphunga, the only brother whom he spared).

When the year of secrecy is over, the official proclamation of the mourning is made. (Ba palusha nkosi). The people come to the capital, clan after clan, sounding their fanfares on trumpets of antelope horns (bunanga, see Chapter III), and bringing with them an ox or a goat. These animals are slaughtered and their bladders are presented to the heir who pins them into his hair, so that, without any official proclamation having been made, every warrior at once recognises the future chief. All heads are shaven in sign of mourning, the adult men remove their war crown (p. 130) and the people are clothed in *malopa* (a blue cloth); but as the decease is not of recent date and has been known more or less for some time, the outward manifestations of grief are reduced to a minimum and dances follow in their train. The delegates from the adjoining countries also come to make their condolences. When all have paid their respects, the mourning is really ended (nkosi wu yu !). The King is dead, long live the King !

As we saw, amongst the Nkuna the proclamation of the death

of a chief is made on the same day as the installation of his successor.

As regards the *queens* (tinkosikazi, a Zulu word), the chief's wives, there is not much to say about them. We have seen that one of them occupies a particularly honourable position having been bought with the people's money and being " the wife of the country ", the one whose son will be the heir to the chieftainship. However she is not necessarily the great wife. This name is applied to the first married who remains the real spouse, the one at whose death



Poot. G. Liengme.

Ngoni Queens.

the chief will perform the ceremony of widowhood. Should the wife of the country die and should she not be the first married, he will not go through that rite on her account.

Princesses are lobola with more money than ordinary girls. Except in this, they do not differ from them. It is not common for a woman to be called to the dignity of chieftainship amongst Thonga ; in this respect they differ from the Ba-Pedi, or Transvaal Ba-Suto, who have had many illustrious reigning queens : Modjadji, Male etc. I only know one such case amongst the Ronga and the queen is still living. Her name is Mida-

mbuze, daughter of Dambuze. Dambuze was the chief of a part of the Mabota country, northward of Lourenço Marques. At his death, his son Gwaba was put in his place. But he was deported by the Portuguese and his sister, Midambuze, filled the position. Consequently she was not lobola, but she chose a husband for herself, a man of common origin (a titlhuba nuna). Her son can eventually succeed her ; in this case only can a uterine nephew of a chief take his place.

At Gungunyana's court queens were playing a great part. This seems to be in accordance with the Zulu custom. After the death of Chaka's mother, sexual relations were taboo for the whole tribe during one year, and children conceived during that time were murdered by the order of the chief ! (See Colenso. Ten weeks in Natal).

I know of no case in which a foreigner became chief of a clan through having married one of its princesses. He can become hosana, but the true hosana will be his wife and he himself will be but a prince consort. I have heard of two instances in which this happened.

CHAPTER III

The Court and Tribunal

Although Royalty makes but little display amongst the Ba-Ronga, still each Chief is the centre of a court of greater or less brilliancy.

A. THE VILLAGE OF THE CHIEF

The village in which he resides is not called *muti* (as is the case with the ordinary hamlets of his subjects), but *ntsindja*, that is " the capital." It is generally larger than the ordinary villages, is built by the young men of the tribe, after the marriage of the chief, and is also kept in repair by them, one of their principal duties being to keep the public square in a state of continual cleanliness and to weed it at certain seasons of the year.

One of my countrymen, Dr J. de Montmollin, visited the capital of the Tembe clan and took some interesting photographs of it in July 1900. The whole village was surrounded by a high and thorny circular fence, much stronger than is the case with ordinary kraals. The inside of the fence was divided into two parts : the front part, to which the main entrance gave access, and the back part with the huts of the queens. The front part was the square (hubo and bandla) with shady trees, under which visitors were sitting ; there was only one hut in it, on the left side near the fence ; the back part comprised the huts of the queens, which were separated from the square by a high wall of reeds, carefully built, and in which only a few narrow

Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

Main gate of the Tembe capital.

Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

The " hubo ", square of the Tembe capital
(The huts of the queens in the background, behind the reed wall).

entrances were left. The traveller was told that the access to this kind of gynecium was taboo for all the men. However he was allowed to visit it. Behind those huts were two passages between poles nicely arranged, one leading to the pig-sties, another to the bush. The photographer was told that is was intended to secure an exit for the queens in case of war... I suppose it had a more common and practical use in every day life!

Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

Back gate with hen house.

They are the *psiruba* of the queens (p. 281). In the royal kraal these back entrances are taboo.

It is on the square that the men of the neighbourhood love to meet in the morning, when they come to pay their respects to the Chief: they sit down in groups and discuss the news of the day: this is called, as we saw, "ku ya bandla", "to go to the men's square". Everybody is welcome there, not only members of the reigning family, but also those of the clans conquered by the actual chiefs, (as the Hoñwana, Mahlangwane etc., in Nondwane. Page 330). There is no lack of beer, made from maize or millet, when crops have been good, the women fre-

quently bringing brimming jars to the capital; the daily visits of the men are not therefore altogether disinterested.

Phot. Dr J. de Montmollin.

Back gate.

B. COURT PERSONAGES

Amongst those most frequently seen at the Court, we must mention the Counsellors, the Favourites, the Herald and the Official Vituperator.

I. *The Counsellors.*

The Counsellors, tindjuna,(1) constitute a Cabinet which assists the chief in carrying on the functions of Royalty. There are several grades of these functionaries; firstly the Principal Counsellors

(1) The Zulu word *induna* is well known and has been more or less adopted in current speech in South Africa. The Thonga form is ndjuna, pl. tindjuna. I employ both these forms indiscriminately.

(letikulu) whose province it is to discuss and decide the more serious questions which affect the country. These are generally the uncles of the chief, or men of riper age from the collateral branches of his family, In Nondwane, during the war of 1894, it was Magomanyana and Mundulukele, brothers of the late Maphunga, uncles of the reigning chief Mahazule, and later on Nwakubyele, who had charge of the interests of the eastern

Sunduza, Chief of the Maluleke clan, with his Counsellors (N. E. Transvaal).

portion of the country, together with Nwambalane. These tindjuna watch over the chief, and have the right of finding fault with him if they are not satisfied with his conduct.

In the second place come the Military Counsellors, the Generals of the army (tindjuna ta yimpi) who direct fighting operations, (Shitleñwana in Nondwane, Mpompi and Mahagane in Zihlahla).

Then there are Counsellors who are especially entrusted with the business of the adjoining countries, whom we might call Agents General, one being appointed to represent each country. We have already seen that these officials form an indispensable

link in the diplomatic, and even in the matrimonial relations, between one kingdom and another.

If these men are intelligent, they acquire great influence with the chief and may even be able to impose their will upon him. This was the case in September 1894, when the young king Nwamantibyane was prevented by his counsellors obeying the summons of the Portuguese Government, who claimed his assistance in fighting Mahazule (See App. VIII). They often act as a useful counterpoise to the autocratic power of the chief.

Lastly we find another category of Counsellors : those appointed by the chief in the various districts, to act as overseers or magistrates, to adjudicate the petty differences of the people ; they must refer to the capital all important affairs (timhaka), the quarrels which the head of the village is unable to settle, and all matters which can only be judged by the chief, to whom they are of the greatest assistance in his decisions, being past masters in the art of Bantu reasoning.

The tindjuna are thus a complete organisation, as necessary to the chief as they are to the orderly development of tribal life.

II. *The Favourites, or Messengers.*

When the chief is crowned while still young, he gathers around him a circle of personal friends of his own age who are called *tinxekwa*. This is a Zulu word and it seems that this custom has been borrowed from the Zulu court procedure. In Ronga they are called *tinyumi*, which means messengers, and they generally build a *lao*, viz., a bachelor's house, near the capital, to be ready to answer to any call. They partake in the games of their royal comrade and also in his feasts, but they have no official authority.

III. *The Herald.*

On one occasion I happened to be the guest, with one of my colleagues, of the chief Nwamantibyane, long before there was any question of the war of Lourenço Marques. Stretched in our hammocks, which we had fixed to the roof inside a hut placed at our disposal for the night, we were trying to sleep when, about 4 a. m., we were awakened by an extraordinary sound: it was in a very high key, words sung, shouted, voluble and monotonous, in fact a most peculiar and never-to-be-forgotten musical production! Further sleep was impossible and for more than half an hour, we were obliged to submit to this ear-splitting performance :

" Yethi (Bayete), we hosi, wene shitlangu sho ringana tilo, mathathala i tinyeleti, nkungu wa shone i hweti ! We ! nkandji wa ku wona, ku baleka minambyana ! " — " Bahete ! O chief ! You shield us as heaven ! The marks of this shield are like the stars ! You who trample dry ground so that rivers at once spring forth ! "

It was the *mbongi wa ku pfusha*, the herald sounding the reveille; an individual who has " the chest well developed ", as they say in Ronga, which does not mean that he is sound in the wind and possesses healthy lungs, but that he is a man of great eloquence. In our tribe the chest (pectus) is held to be the seat of knowledge and of the gift of oratory ! Every morning, before sunrise, this royal flatterer comes to the door of the chief's hut and sings the glorious deeds of his ancestors, recalling their names and acts of prowess; to these praises, he adds a general disparagement (sandja) of the chief himself, referring to him as a coward, a child in comparison with his father, his grandfather and all his noble deceased progeniters. " Lead us to battle ! Show us what you can do ! " And the chief must be awakened every day by this strange concert, which sometimes lasts for hours !

The flatterer likes to accompany his chief when he goes to

visit the Whites. In front of the offices of the Municipal Council of Lourenço Marques, I once witnessed the arrival of Sigaole, chief of Matjolo, who came thither to look at Gungunyane, who had been taken prisoner by the Portuguese in January 1896; his *mbongi* was among his following. He was an old man, named Mabobo. Dressed up in a jacket, by no means too clean, and with a cap on his head, he yelled the praises of the royal family of Matjolo; this was in Zulu and doubtless with a special terminology. He worked like a madman and no one took the slightest notice of him!

When the chief kills an ox and some little delay possibly occurs in distributing the meat, it appears the *mbongi* is the duly qualified beggar who goes to claim the soldiers' share. He addresses the chief much as follows: "Don't you see all those men in your village? Are they not dogs? Why do you starve us? You only give meat to the women... Is it women who will defend you when the enemies attack you? etc. etc." At the coronation of the chiefs it is this herald who sings their praises in the procession I have already described. Strange to say, the *mbongi* is allowed great licence and may even insult the chief without provoking his anger: on the contrary, the herald is respected and a special portion of meat is reserved for him. Any one can aspire to the office provided he be sufficiently garrulous.

The most eloquent of the Thonga heralds whom I ever met is Mawewe, the mbongi of the Nkuna clan. He was an elderly man in 1900 and had the record of a long career behind him, having been the mbongi of Manukosi. "I used to praise him from morn to night (ndji peta dambu) and he gave me a heifer as a reward". As the French writer Buffon used to put on his cuffs before writing, so Mawewe, when he intended to praise his chief Muhlaba, adorned himself with the tail of the nsimango antelope, with feathers of nkulunkulu (the bird of the chiefs) and of eagle, with skins of snakes, of reed buck, of leopard, with nails, or teeth, or hair of elephants, rhinoceros and hippopotamus, and then he commenced:

Muhlaba Shiluvane, (1) you are like the rhinoceros who seizes a man, bites him through and through, rolls him over and cuts him in two ! You are like the crocodile which lives in water; it bites a man ! You are like its claws ; it seizes a man by his arms and legs, it drags

Muhlaba, the Chief of the Nkuna clan. *Phot. A. Borel.*

him into the deep pool to eat him at sunset; it watches over the entrance to prevent other crocodiles from taking its prey... Muhlaba ! You are like the ram; when it butts with its head, it knocks a man down; like a goat, like the son of the goat, which is herded by the boys, which is very cunning : it pricks up its ears, it prepares itself for defence, when attacked !

Tail of nsimango, you are like Muhlaba, you are of a great beauty,

(1) Father of Muhlaba.

you are shining inside the forest, the black forest, you are sparkling, kati-kati-kati (1), a man may truly fears when he sees you!

Give them meat, that they all may eat! Give your men the foreleg, give them the hindleg, that they all may eat to their hearts' content... Draw their legs (ba koke milenge), so that they fall back in terror of you!

Why do you govern them so mildly! Look at them with terrible eyes! You are a coward! The Bvesha want to kill you! Act with bravery and defend yourself!

Muhlaba Dabuka! Men are coming, oxen are coming. You are on the top of the hills, you are like heaven which roars... The lightning is like you, it is full of strength, it is terrible! Your saliva is white, your eyes are beaming, your face is elongated, your body is like the stone of gold (auriferous quartz); your fingers are long. You are known in every country. At Gungunyana, they know you. At Ngwana (Swaziland), they know you. The Zulu know you! At Mosilakatse, they know you. You are like the grass on the road; when people trample on it, they crush it to the ground, but when the rain come, it grows again and covers the earth. You are like the water of the river, how beautiful! The water is clear and pure, though impurities may float upon it, they pass away and the water is pure again!

The Bvesha weep at Sikokoro's kraal (2)! They weep at Sikhukhunu's! You have taken their charms! You have sprinkled your warriors with them. Muhlaba, you have beaten them with the shaft of the assagay, your men crossed the river, they went to kill the enemies in their own kraal!

You are like the ostrich feather, the white one, very white, or the red one of the bird which cries tswe-tswe, the bird called rivi, which adorns the chiefs!

At Nyarin (3), they dispute chieftainship (banga buhosi); they are

(1) Descriptive adverb.

(2) In 1901, there was a native war in which Muhlaba and the Pedi chief Maaghe fought against their neighbour Sikororo and his ally Sikhukhukhu, heir of Sekukuni. On the 7th of November a serious battle took place in Shiluvane where the assaillants were repulsed and more than forty of them were killed. (See App. VII)

(3) Here Mawewe makes an allusion to the circumstances in which Muhlaba took the chieftainship and which have been explained when dealing with the law of succession. The capital of the tribe was still at Nyarin, at that time, viz., in the hills near New Agatha. (See page 384).

going to kill each other. Mapsakomo says : "It is mine!" Muholo says : " It is mine ! " Shirundju (1) took him (Muhlaba) on his arms... Mankhelu is like the duiker antelope! They catch him by the ear and he escapes from their hands ! He is like the water of the well : they draw it up... it springs up again and fills up the well. (Viz., Mankhelu is never tired when defending the cause of Muhlaba).

"Run, go and tell Mandlamakulu, Shiluvane's brother: "The power belongs to me." Run, go and tell Mpapalati : "The power is mine." Run go and tell Mulondjo : "The power is mine " (2) !

Such is the landatory song of Mawewe, one of the great men at the Nkuna court. No doubt this is one of the best examples of Thonga poetry and a characteristic piece of primitive literature. In the savage tribe the mbongi is the prototype of the poet laureate of civilised Courts. But there is yet another functionary to be considered whose duties are still more strange than those of the herald; he is called :

IV. *The Public Vituperator.*

(Shitale sha tiko.)

He is a kind of Court Jester who has the right of casting the vilest insults, the most disgraceful accusations in the teeth of any and all the natives of the country. He never abuses strangers, but as long as he confines his vituperations to his own countrymen, he enjoys perfect immunity.

The chief even is not safe from his attacks; he dares to say anything! "Just see him arriving in your village", said Tobane to me, in his picturesque language. "He begins shouting out the most frightful things. He accuses you of incest, of taking your own sisters as wives! Even if he sees you talking to your

(1) One of the great counsellors who took the part of Muhlaba as did also Mankhelu and Shikhibane.

(2) Quotation of words of Muhlaba himself who sent messengers to all his uncles, to all the petty chiefs under him, to announce officially that he has taken the chieftainship.

"great sister-in law", whom your wife's brother married with your oxen, whom you treat with the greatest respect, he will not hesitate to pass remarks which will make you blush with shame! He will go and take the food you are cooking, will even snatch from the chief's hands the meat he is eating... So, when you see him coming to your village, you hasten to meet him and take him a present to try and avoid having to listen to his horrible insults. Sometimes the *shitale* of the country behaves himself quite nicely, stays in his own village and attends the national assemblies as quietly as any other person, but, once he begins to rattle off his vituperations, beware! Nothing will stop him! He respects nothing, human or divine!" The Court Jester is of undoubted Thonga origin, as old as the tribe itself, according to Tobane. The position is official and even hereditary. At Zihlahla it was Nwachapane who held the extraordinary post of Public Vituperator. In Nondwane it was Mutjunkwa of the Shibindji family. He insulted the chief with this word: "Musathanyoko". There was also a woman who dared to do the same to Maphunga.

Phot P. Berthoud.
Molwele, the dwarf.

It is difficult to understand the raison d'être of this strange institution. Is the *shitale* a public censor, to whom the tribe entrusts the privilege of calling attention to facts which others would not dare to bring to light? Is there some analogy be-

tween this " fool " of an African Court and Triboulet ? (1) I could not say.

C. SUNDRY COURT CUSTOMS

The paraphernalia of royalty are very modest in the Thonga courts. However there are some to be mentioned in addition to the regalia which I have described.

I. *The Big Drum* (muntshintshi).

It is found in every capital, even sometimes in the sub-chief's villages. It is made of a hollowed stem, somewhat like an ordinary mortar; or it may be rounded, even provided with three legs, as in Nondwane; a piece of skin is stretched over the opening. It may be the skin of an elephant's ear, of a buffalo, of an ox or of an antelope *mangulwe*. This instrument is subject to some taboos: when the skin cracks, it is prohibited to look inside. There is something mysterious about it and nobody must disclose that mystery. People say that a bullet is introduced into it when made. In Shiluvane they pretended that the skull of the hostile chief, Sikororo, killed in the battle of Nov. 1901, had been put into the big drum! At any rate, there is a special individual who is summoned to repair it and he receives a fowl as reward.

(1) In this connection I reproduce from a photograph, taken at Shiluvane in 1885, the portrait of a remarkable personage who is not a Thonga but a Pedi, a subject of the chief Maaghe. Although this extraordinary dwarf does not act officially as the Vituperator, he was widely famed for his witty sayings and his incomparable mimicry. The Native Commissioner took him to Pretoria and Johannesburg some years ago as a curiosity, and it seems that he was exhibited for money! The name of this little man is Molwele, a veritable ethnographic phenomenon, although he is not precisely the Public Vituperator of the country.

The big drum is beaten on various occasions:

a) To announce a great fatality, especially the death of a chief, or the day of the publication of the mourning; also the approach of the inundation, when the Nkomati river rises, in January, February, and threatens to cover the whole land; again when the bush fire threatens to destroy the capital.

b) To summon warriors to the capital in case of imminent war.

c) To execute various musical performances. The big drum leads a special dance (nkino), which takes place at the capital during the winter, when the harvest is finished, and the country happy and prosperous. It is accompanied by a smaller drum (shikolombane) which is called the "son" of the big one. The *shikolombane* is more elongated and has no legs. Its sound is high and piercing, while the tone of the *muntshirtshi* is deep and low. The music properly speaking of this dance is provided by the *bunanga*.

II. *The Bunanga.*

is the regular *band*, which is met with in every royal clan. This word comes from *nanga* trumpet (pl. tinanga). But the trumpets composing the bunanga are not those vulgar pierced tibias of goats used by the herdboys. They are larger horns of the mhalambala (Hippotragus Niger), or of the mhala (Zulu impala), pierced at their base in such a way that they produce different tones. These instruments are made by specialists, (it was Nwamatshomane in Nondwane), so as to form a kind of orchestra (simo) composed of ten instruments. To play them is a veritable art. The players are standing round the two drumbeaters. The big drum gives the time: when it beats slowly, "tu-tu-tu", the ten musicians must dance in a ring, viz., they must march after each other, playing, making certain grimaces and gesticulations. When the drum beats more slowly and more softly, they must retire in a line and march slowly. The drum accelerates the time: then they come to the centre once more and dance in a

ring, quicker and quicker. The executants follow each other in a given order: the largest and deepest horn being in front, the smallest and highest toned one at the end of the group. Sometimes three or four orchestras perform at the same time. (1)

The bunanga is an old Ronga custom and is very picturesque indeed. As for its musical importance, I shall refer to it again in Part V.

III. *The shipalapala.*

Speaking of musical instruments of the Court, I must also mention *the trumpet of assembly*, *shipalapala*, which is the proper means of summoning the subjects to the capital. The sound of the big drum, though heard very far, cannot reach the end of the country. So, when the chief wants his men to assemble at once, he uses the *shipalapala*. It is a horn of mhalamhala, or of nyala or of phifa antelope, the sound of which is like mpu-ù-u (with an accent on the second syllable). The envoy of the chief runs to the capital of a sub-chief, blowing all the time. When he has reached that village, he transmits his message and a young man starts at once with the shipalapala of the sub-chief to another district. So, in a short time, notice is given to the whole tribe to assemble.

IV. *Visitors.*

When a stranger passes through the capital, he must sit down outside the central square and at some little distance from it.

(1) I remember having heard the bunanga practising in the various sub-clans of Nondwane in 1891, as each sub-chief had his own. They were preparing to go to the capital to mourn Maphunga whose death had just been announced; I saw the bunanga performing its best melodies before Lord Selborne, when he came to pay a visit to the Portuguese settlement of Morakwen in 1908. The Administrator had organised for him a "batuque" (name given by the Portuguese to those native dances), and the warriors of Nondwane did their best to interest the White Chiefs!

Some one will come and inquire what he wants; he replies: "I come from such and such a country, and I wish to pay my respects to the chief." Then the counsellor or "Agent General" charged with the affairs of the travellers' country will come and converse with him and announce him (bika) to the chief, who will receive him affably and possibly assign him a hut to sleep in, in case he wishes to stay the night, at the same time providing him with food. Should the chief be particularly well disposed towards his guest, he will kill a calf or even an ox for him; and he, on his return, will speak in praise of the hospitality he has received, saying; "The chief made me share his reign", literally: "He made me reign, (a ndji fumisile)." Such is the procedure when the respective countries of guest and host are neighbouring and the tribes on good and friendly terms. Should relations between them be at all strained, or should war be imminent, all the roads would be closed and no one allowed to enter the capital.

V. *The Kondza custom.*

The chief is also approached by those who may wish to become subject to him, to be naturalized; this is called *kondza*, from a Zulu word conveying this meaning. The chief will assign to the new *nandja* a dwelling place, and he will be incorporated in the nation without further ceremony. By this kondza, he binds himself to pay the taxes (See the story of Mutipi. *Les chants et les contes de Ba-Ronga*, page 164).

Naturalised strangers, however, do not eat the first fruits (luma) with the same drug as the people of the country. They have their own medicine amd take it according to their own rules. However they are forbidden to luma before the chief of their adopted land (p. 369).

VI. *Diplomatic relations.*

We have seen that they are very carefully conducted, each of the neighbouring clans having one counsellor entrusted with the care of its affairs. In case of war, friendly clans frequently make alliances (shinakulobye). They send messages to each other, or they have special means of communicating news in case of war. Supposing, for instance, Nwamba and Nondwane should fight against Matjolo. They put two traps at their common boundary, on the side of the road, one on the territory of Nwamba and one on that of Nondwane. These traps consist in a rod bent by a string fastened to the ground. Should the army of Matjolo have made an invasion during the night into Nwamba and caused them to fly, men of Nwamba will at once go and undo the trap which is on their side ; in the morning, the people of Nondwane will know that they must also fly.

D. THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CHIEF

In the Thonga Court there is no separation of powers. The legislative executive and judicial powers are all in the hands of the chief aided by his counsellors. The chief is the supreme authority and his decisions are without appeal.

I. *Legislative affairs.*

The *chief* makes the laws (p. 354) and presides at discussions which end in a resolution. But his counsellors assist him.

Here is an example of such a decision taken at Maphunga's court. There was no uniformity as to the money to be paid for a lobolo, and some fathers claimed as much as £ 20 or £ 30 for their daughters. The great counsellors of the capital decided

(tjimba mhaka, viz., to tie the matter) that a lobolo should be £ 15.10 at the maximum. They "tied the matter" with the assent of the chief. Then all the sub-chiefs and counsellors were summoned to the capital. The chief called the roll to ascertain if they were all present. The great counsellor then said to the assembly: "The herds which people claim are too large. Have you gold mines and do you know how to cast coins? Henceforth do not lobola with too much money. £ 15.10 is quite enough!" Every sub-chief, on his return home, called his men and informed them of the decision: "Hi to timhaka! Such are the matters!" said they. Men were disappointed. They wept! But they had to accept the decision. To oppose it is taboo! "Psa yila!"

A *native debate* or discussion is conducted on very different lines from those to which we are generally accustomed, nothing ever being put to the vote. The chief presides. A proposition is put forward in short sentences, generally interrogative, by one of the counsellors. The assembly listens in silence until the mover concludes with an energetic "Ahina", being the equivalent of "that's all right". (See p. 35). Another individual elaborates the matter proposed, saying: "Have you not heard what he said? He said so and so". This is the way of seconding the motion. The debate proceeds, and, little by little, the objections are brought forward and the assembly comes to a decision.

Phot. A. Borel.

An habitué of the Nkuna Court.

It often happens that the chief does not say a word: when he see that the counsellors are agreed and he has no objection, he merely shows his assent by nodding the head. So the decision is arrived at without his intervention and without any vote being taken.

The voice of the majority has not been ascertained by any show of hands but it is generally perceived by intuition in a very remarkable way, and grave counsellors, who have been squatting in a circle all through the discussion, jump to their feet and disperse, knowing perfectly well what has been decided. If however the counsellors do not agree, they put the matter in the hand of the chief, and the chief, after having listened to the arguments pro and con, "cuts the matter" (tjema mhaka) by some short sentences, after which everybody must shout the royal salutation: "Bayete!"

When there are two parties present the debate is conducted according to other rules. For instance, if a stranger wants to have speech with a chief or to proffer some request, he is generally accompanied by a counsellor. The chief, together with some of his men, receives him either in the hut, if the matter must be secret, or on the square, if there is no objection to make it public. The chief and his men sit on one side, the visitor on the other; if he wishes to conform strictly to all the laws of etiquette, he will first explain the matter to his own Agent General, who will communicate with the chief's special counsellor, repeating the words of the visitor, sentence by sentence; the counsellor will, in his turn, communicate with the chief, again telling him the whole story, as if he had not heard a word of it before. The affair will thus have passed through three hands and the answer should, in due formality, be sent through the same channels. These precautions, which seem eminently superfluous, even somewhat ridiculous, to a person unacquainted with Bantu etiquette, evidently proceed from the fact that there are no stenographers, or secretaries, to furnish any written record of the proceeding, so that it is necessary to have as many witnesses as possible and that these thoroughly understand the matter under consideration.

II. *Judicial Cases.*

1) Sense of justice

As has often been remarked, the Bantu possess a strong sense of justice. They believe in social order and in the observance of the laws and, though these laws are not written, they are universal and perfectly well known. The law is the custom, that which has always been done. The old men, the counsellors and more particularly the counsellors of the capital, are those who can speak authoritatively. But everybody is welcome in the *hubo*, where matters are discussed; even a stranger can take part in the discussion. "No one is excluded, if he speaks rightly: fools only, those who do not know anything" (Mankhelu).

This participation in the discussion of the hubo has developed the juridical sense to a wonderful extent amongst the Bantu. They are all born advocates and judges, and take a great interest in this business! No wonder therefore that the Thonga vocabulary possesses a rich set of *judicial expressions*. Here are the most common: *Nau* (pl. milau) means law, custom. *Ku tlula nau*, to jump over the law, means the transgression. *Nandju* (pl. *milandju*) means the fault resulting from the transgression. This interesting word comes from *ku landja*, to follow. It applies in the first instance to cases which lead to a prosecution, but secondly to any fault. *Ku doha*, is to be wrong and *ku dohela mhunu*, the applicative derivative, to wrong another. *Ku da*, to eat somebody, or *dela*, is also a picturesque expression employed for injury to property. *Ku ramba* (Dj.), *ku rjamela hosin* (Ro.) is the technical expression to designate a complaint lodged before the chief. *Ku riha* (Dj.), *djiha* (Ro.) means to pay a fine, and *rihisa*, *djihisa* (the factitive derivate), to impose a fine.

This strong sense of justice however differs from the European one on certain points. Owing to their collectivist notions, the

Bantu consider relatives as responsible for the debts of their own kin, as we already saw (p. 302) Another case in which they entertain ideas which seem very strange to us is this: when anyone has lent you an implement and you make a bad use of it, the fault is as much the lender's as the borrower's. I remember a queer story which took place in my school in Rikatla. Some boys had to go in the afternoon to work in the vegetable garden under the supervision of their overseer. On the way one of them happened to injure his foot by walking on a thorn. So, when he arrived in the garden, he borrowed a knife from the overseer and began to make sandals of palm-leaf pith. The elder boy entreated him to work. He refused to obey, so the overseer denounced him publicly, when the weekly inquiry into the conduct of the boys was made, on the following Friday. But the occasional shoemaker did not admit being guilty of anything at all, and his last argument was this: "I cannot understand how Mr. overseer can accuse me whilst he himself lent me the knife which I used to carve my sandals"! D. Kidd tells similar stories about Pondos in his "Essential Kafir".

So there are differences between Native and European conceptions of justice, and Bantu do not always draw the same conclusions as we do from given premises. Native Commissioners must remember this and, in order to enlighten the native mind, they must try to find where these differences lie. But these are minor ones, and the sense of justice is nevertheless one of the most striking and promising features of the Bantu.

Before enumerating the various cases which can be brought before the Native Court, let me remark that, after all, Bantu are very peaceful, law-abiding people, when in normal conditions; when protected against alcoholic excesses they are little addicted to crime. In the Blue Book for Native Affairs of Cape Colony, 1908, the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territory comments on "the general docility of the Natives, the perfect immunity from crimes of violence, which the European population male and female, enjoys amongst them, and the cheapness of police administration." He adds: "The policing of the

Territories, including the Detective Force, costs only 7d. per head of the territorial population, or, counting Chiefs and Headmen whose functions are mainly administrative, 10d. against 6s. 3d. per head for policing the Colony proper. Reports from twenty districts comment on the paucity or absence of crime. Kentani, with a population of 34,000 did not furnish a single case for the Circuit Court. The Magistrates of four districts remark on "the peaceable and law-abiding character of the Native", the Magistrate of Kentani adding: "when kept away from the drink curse". (*Christ. Express*, Aug. 1908.)

I think the same report might be made in most of the districts of South Africa where natives still live by themselves.

The state of affairs would be very different in the Town locations, where we meet with a great number of men and women of dissolute morals. They often are backsliders who have left the Mission Stations because they did not like to submit to the Christian rule of morality. So they have freed themselves from all restraints, tribal as well as Christian, and, if they have not entirely lost all sense of justice they, at any rate, do not walk "in the paths of righteousness". I am only here concerned with clan Natives.

2) Civil cases

I will not pretend that Thonga exactly know the difference between civil and criminal cases, the same tribunal judging them both and all being called by the same name, milandju.

If any distinction is made, it would be between private and official cases: *private cases* being those which are settled by the two parties concerned alone, without the intervention of the chief; whilst *official cases* are those in which the matter (mhaka) has been brought to the capital. As already explained, the headmen of the village try to settle the difficulties themselves; if they succeed, all the better, as the fine will be reduced to its minimum, whilst, before the Court, the fine would be doubled and the chief would keep half of it!

Ninety per cent of the civil cases are in connection with *lobola*. They are sometimes most intricate and I refer to the description already given of some of them (p. 266 and Appendix III).

Divorce cases are also common. When a woman has definitely left her husband, her relatives must return the lobolo money. "You must abandon to them £ 5 or an ox", says Mankhelu. The chief Mubvesha who was known for his avarice used to arrest the husband and make him pay £ 25 ; he returned £ 15 to the wife's relatives and kept £ 10 for himself.

When money is returned, the children belong to the mother (See page 263).

Many cases can happen in connection with *cattle*. The case of *redhibition* is foreseen: when I buy an ox and it dies on my hands from a disease which was not known at the date of my purchase but which, however, then existed, I have the right to go and ask for another one in its place. But I bring the skin of the dead ox with me and one hoe inside for the meat which I have eaten. If the seller refuses to accept my claim, I go to the chief and complain. He will call the refractory person and say to him: " Did not this man act nicely when he put a hoe inside the skin? Give him another ox!" (Mankhelu).

When goats have damaged somebody's garden, there is no fine to pay. The shepherds are whipped and thus the matter is concluded. Should however the father of the boys take their part and protect them with his weapons, he will be summoned to the tribunal of the chief and have to pay a fine of £ 5 or two or three goats.

Thonga Natives, who have but a few head of cattle, are accustomed to entrust them to the care of neighbours who possess a large herd, in order to spare themselves the trouble of finding herding boys. There are some laws regulating this business. If the owner of the cow, or the pig, or the goat, gives money in advance to the master of the large herd, all the calves, pigs, kids, which may be born, revert to him. But if he has not paid anything, the master of the herd is entitled to choose one pig in the first litter; or he can keep the third or fourth calf or

kid. If it be a hen, one of its chickens will belong to the man who took care of her. Should the owner forget to remit the due reward, there will be trouble (pongwe). When he goes to take his cattle back, the master of the herd will keep one head for himself, and, if a dispute arises, both will go to the chief, at least if the matter is important, the animal in question, for instance, being an ox.

If an ox incorporated with another man's herd dies, the master of the herd will inform the owner in order that he may go and dispose of the meat. Should he be living too far off, the ox will be eaten on the spot and the skin will be sent to the owner. Supposing the master of the herd pretends that the ox is dead, but has only put it with another herd, sending a skin to the owner to deceive him? This is a case of theft which will be judged as such.

3) Criminal cases.

Adultery. Our tribe punishes adultery very severely indeed, at least when the woman is married. The fine is a full lobolo. (See page 194). Amongst the Nkuna if the accused man denies his guilt, when questioned indoors, the bones are consulted, or even the magicians who practise the "vumisa" divination. (Part VI). If found guilty, he will have to pay an extra fine of two oxen. (1)

When the abducted woman is an unmarried girl, the matter is not serious. No trouble is entailed, provided she does not become pregnant. In the latter case, the seductor can say: "Ndji dlele ku dya, I have killed to eat", viz. "I am ready to lobola the girl" (p. 97). Should the girl not consent, the man is free. But if the man does not like to marry the girl by paying a full lobolo, whilst the girl and her relatives want him to do so, he will have to pay as much as £ 30 and an ox.

(1) The neighbouring Chopi tribe, on the contrary, leaves the husband to arrange matters as he likes. Formerly he used to kill the adulterer. But cases of adultery are never brought before the chief.

"He has spoilt his cause!" His own relatives will be arrested and forced to pay. They are reponsible for him and will scold him severely (Mankhelu).

Fighting ending in blows. The wounded man runs to the square of the capital and shows himself. The assailants will have to pay a fine of £ 8, three for the chief and five for the victim, or of two oxen, one for the chief and one for the plaintiff. (Mankhelu).

Murder. A distinction is made between involuntary murder, which is an accident (mhango, Dj.), and a deliberate assassination.

As for *involuntary murder,* Mankhelu describes the proceedings in the case as follows: — Should you have killed a man by accident in a hunting trip, for instance, you will try to arrange matters directly with his relatives, if you were good friends; your relatives will give them a girl. You dare not offer your own daughter, because they may refuse her, on account of their bad feelings! The same objection will not be made, if your people provide the girl. They will accompany her with ten hoes and one ox, saying: "This is fat to smear our daughter." The notion which lies at the bottom of this custom is not that a human person is the natural compensation for another human person, but that you give the diminished family a means of recuperating its loss. In fact as soon as this girl has born a child to the relatives of the deceased, she is free. If these men like to keep her as their wife, they must lobola. Viguet explains that this is done according to the old saying of native law: "Nwombekazi a yi ambi nandju" viz. "a cow which has calved is not used to pay a fine: the calf pays it." (See page 215). He adds that the ten hoes sent with the girl pay for the ribs of the murdered man. (The Ba-Thonga believe that the human body has but ten ribs!) A case of involuntary homicide generally is not brought before the chief, as the law is well known and no one would try to evade his duty. Should however the murderer not have been on good terms with the deceased, the matter will be discussed before the Court.

If the murder has been *deliberate,* it is punished by death.

At least such was the law in former times, when Natives still possessed the power of condemning to death. Now the fine is also the remittance of a woman. But owing to the existing hatred, and from fear of being obliged to lobola the relative of the murderer, the family of the deceased does not take the girl. She is sold by her parents and only the money is remitted to the plaintiff. (Mankhelu).

Amongst the Ba-Ronga, when a near relative of the murdered man wants to avenge himself by killing the assassin, his people prevent him from doing so, in order to bring the matter before the chief. When a man called Mashabe was killed by the son of Gigiseka, Maphunga's brother, the murderer, had to pay £ 20. The fine can go to £ 25, but the idea is also to help the bereaved family to acquire a new spouse and, by her, new members. As for the murderer, he is regarded with scorn, and despised by the whole community. For a whole week, he must eat apart. He is unclean. So, at the time of luma bukanye, (page 372), he must also take miluru medicine together with warriors who have killed enemies; but he does not drink it boastfully, extolling his deed! People say of him: "Look at the murderer!" (Mboza).

The vendetta, the savage custom which makes it incumbent on the relations of a murdered man to avenge his deatht themselves at all costs and by any means, is absolutely absent from the Thonga practice. It can be said that, as regards punishment of murder, they have reached quite a civilised stage in their judicial institutions. They are in advance of many tribes. The same cannot be asserted when dealing with witchcraft!

Witchcraft (Buloyi). For the Thonga mind this is one of the greatest crimes which a man can commit. It is equivalent to assassination, even worse than murder, as a dim idea of anthropophagy is added to the mere accusation of killing. A wizard kills human beings to eat their flesh. We shall study the conceptions of *buloyi* later on (Part VI) from a psychological point of view. Here we mention it only as far as it gives rise to judicial cases. This special crime being committed in great secrecy during the night, in most instances even unconsciously,

the Bantu tribunal uses two or three magical means for discovering it. These *means of inquiry* which civilised nations have long ago abandoned are:

1) *The divination by casting lots.* The objects used in our tribe for this purpose are the marvellous bones, astragalus of goats, antelopes, etc, and shells, which I intend studying in a special chapter. When they have designated (ku ba, to beat) the wizard or witch (noi) who has killed such and such a person, they are consulted a second time. If they confirm their verdict, the relatives of the deceased go to the chief and lodge their complaint. The accusation becomes official and is now in the hands of the tribunal.

2) The chief sends the plaintiff and accused to the magician who proceeds to the *divination by questioning* them and working himself up into an extatic condition (vumisa).

3) Should the accused be again designated and should he deny his crime, he may ask to pass through the *ordeal*, viz, the trial by the solaneous plant called mondjo. If the drug intoxicates him, his guilt is confirmed for the third time and the tribunal will condemn him. The punishment for *buloyi* is death, either by hanging, or by empaling, or by drowning in the river, if the wizard used to perpetrate his murders by sending crocodiles to kill his victims.

Nowadays Native chiefs dare not put to death suspected witches. Since the Ba-Ronga have been under the jurisdiction of the Whites, the *death penalty* has been abolished. On the other hand, under Gungunyane, executions were of frequent occurrence. When the chief had condemned a man to death, he merely made a sign to one of his executioners who followed the unfortunate individual, as he went away into the bush, possibly quite unconscious of the fate awaiting him, and dealt him a heavy blow from behind with either club or assagay, killing him on the spot. Chiefs now only expel wizards or witches from the country, accompanying them to the boundary, or impose a high fine on them, keeping half of the amount. However there are still individuals who avenge themselves for the death of a relative on the suspected murderer by killing him.

Such cases are not infrequently brought before the Courts of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

What is the duty of the civilised tribunal in such instances? White judges generally condemn to death a man who has killed a "noyi". I know of cases in which even an induna who has hanged a "noyi", duly condemned by the Native Court, was himself considered a criminal and condemned as such. It was our friend Mankhelu, one of the pillars of the Nkuna tribe, the General of the army... He only escaped death owing to petitions sent to the Boer Authorites by both Blacks and Whites. This happened, I think, in 1888. Are European judges right in pronouncing the capital punishment in such cases? This is questionable. It is certainly erroneous to assimilate Mankhelu's act which, in his own eyes, is an act of justice, with an ordinary murderer, and to punish him as an assassin. He did what he thought to be right according to his knowledge. The husband of a bewitched woman who kills the murderer of his wife is more blamable, because his act is not sanctioned by the authority of a regular Court. However neither one nor the other deserve death.

I fully recognise that such doings of the Native tribunals must be stopped. A chief who accepts accusations of witchcraft ought to be punished, especially if it has been duly explained to him that a White Government does not allow any such case to be judged in the country. In the course of time Natives will understand this and the witchcraft superstition will dwindle away. But let us be patient with them, remembering that our forefathers of 300 years ago did exactly the same and burnt hundreds of suspected witches after having made them undergo horrible tortures.

In a essay on the subject published in the S.A.A.A.S Report of 1906, I ventured to suggest certain means of checking the *buloyi* superstition. The Department of Native Affairs might give the following directions to its subordinates, the Native chiefs :

1) The crime of buloyi it not recognised under penal law.

2) The Native chiefs are prohibited from trying any buloyi case.

3) The plaintiff must be reprimanded as disturbing the peace of the country.

4) The witch doctor or mungoma (magician), who pretends to have smelt out a wizard, must be fined as using his authority to deceive people and foster hatred amongst them.

5) No evidence based on the use of divinatory bones must be accepted.

These rules if strictly enforced and combined with Christian teaching and the progress of civilisation, will soon put an end to the scourge of witchcraft.

Insults. Ku rukana or ruketela, to throw insults at each other's head, is very frequent amongst Thonga and does not lead to any judicial case, if not accompanied with assault and bruises. There are however insulting deeds which are considered as crimes. To take human blood, or spittle, or excrement with a stick and to push it to the mouth of a child, for instance, is considered a very serious insult which must be judged before Courts. A man who committed such an offence would have to pay a fine amounting to a whole lobola. I heard of a woman who gave a child a butterfly to eat. The parents of the little one were very angry. She denied having done such a thing. They said to her : " Confess your sin and pay a fine of 5/. " She refused and offered to undergo the ordeal, viz., to drink the mondjo philtre. " If you insist " said they, " you will have to pay £ 10 ". However she persisted and became intoxicated ; it was a proof of her culpability. She was fined to the amount of £ 40, £ 20 for the child and £ 20 for the chief !

To point at any one with the index finger is also a grave insult which can have judicial consequences, because this action is put in close relation with *buloyi*.

Theft (ku yiba) is universally condemned, not so much for its immoral character as for the fact that it renders a normal social life impossible. The notion of *individual property*, though it is not developed as in more civilised nations, is however at the base of the whole Bantu system. The Bantu are agriculturists. They believe that the products of their labour belong to them and that no one else is entitled to appropriate them. The notion of property is in direct relation to work accomplished. (Compare Part IV).

To steal growing mealies is not usual. A thief breaks off the cob, whilst the master of the field first uproots the stalk and then takes the cobs. If a friend of his who happens to

be travelling, passes through his gardens and wants to eat a cob, he is quite welcome to do so. He also uproots the stalk, puts it on one side of the road or leans it against a tree and draws a line on the ground from the place where the stalk grew to the spot where he has put it. Perhaps the owner of the field will discover the uprooted stalk after a whole month. If he inquires who has helped himself to his mealies, his friend will say to him : " Did you not see the line ? " And they will laugh over it (hlekelelana). A thief working hastily would not have had time enough to draw the line !

There are certain magical drugs with which people smear some mealie stalks and they pretend that, if somebody tries to penetrate into their garden to steal, he will have his hand caught and will not be able to get rid of the plant ! For some reason or another, these magical means do not always operate. So the injured person has recourse to the tribunal.

Should the thief be caught in the very fact, there is no difficulty ! His own field will be taken by the owner of the stolen mealies and he will have to pay a fine of one ox, else the matter will be brought before the Court and the only difference will be that the fine will be of two or three oxen, one of which will remain in the hands of the chief. (Mankhelu). If the thief has been clever enough to avoid being caught, if he has stolen from a store hut, natives are clever detectives and he will probably be discovered. These store huts are generally built in the middle of the field, or in the little bush which surrounds the village ; the grass all around has been pulled up and the sand nicely smoothed down, so that any traces of a thief would easily be seen. He will possibly be at once recognised by the trackers, owing to some peculiarity in the marks on the sand, the foot-print of each individual being more or less known : clever detectives can even ascertain the size and bearing of a man from the length of his stride ! If there are no peculiar marks in the foot-prints, the trackers will follow them and reach the village where the thief lives. They will perhaps take him by suprise in his hut. If the matter cannot be settled by the headman of the village and has to be brought before the

chief, the guilty party will be fined as much as two, three or even five pounds sterling (Tobane). (1)

When detectives have been unable to trace a thief, they assume a philosophical attitude and say : " Only wait. A man who has stolen will steal again, and you will catch him another time ! "

Revolt against the decisions of the chief's hubo is very rare. Should any person take the part of a condemned man and encourage him to oppose the decision of the Court, he will be beaten with a shambock on the square of the capital. " U onhi hubo ", " he has spoilt the Court " ! Moreover he may have to pay a fine of £ 2. (Mankhelu).

Answer to some of Professor Frazer's questions on Government. There are no separate chiefs for war and peace. But in time of war the great induna, who is the Commander-in-chief of the army, directs all military operations. — The chief is never required to marry his own sister or daughter. The only similar case of which I have heard, is that of a hunter who must have sexual relations with his daughter before going on a hunting trip (Part IV). — The king's mother does not hold any special office. —

The chief does not keep any portion of his deceased predecessor excepting the nails and hair used for the mhamba (See page 360 and Part VI). — To protect and to prolong his life, diviners sometimes call together the whole clan in order to discover and eventually arrest those who might bewitch and kill the chief. The gathering is called *nyiwa* (See Part VI). — The chief has generally no religious functions to perform as these are conducted by his elders. — As for rain making, it is in the hands of the proper rain doctors (Nkuna) or is obtained by the ceremonies of *mbelele* (Part VI). — He is not held

(1) The following nice couplet in two sentences aptly describes the thief : Shishlungwa rendjeletane ? — The crown on the hut nicely rounded ? Mangatlu a psha ritiho... — The hawk burns his claws...

The thief, he is like a crown on the top of a hut. He is a lazy person, he attitudinises and will not work. Evil will befall him as to a hawk who tries to snatch the meat that is roasting and burns his claws !

responsible for public calamities. — If his bodily or mental powers fail, the tinduna discuss matters in his stead and he is not deposed.

Chiefs are never worshipped during life time. After death, they are deified for their own family — who worship them, but not for their subjects. — They are not supposed to turn into wild beasts after their death. — The custom of appointing mock kings does not exist. Only at the death of a chief can one of his relatives be nominated to take his place, and watch over his property until the adjudication of the inheritance.

CHAPTER IV

The Army

A. WAR-LIKE PROCLIVITIES OF THE THONGA

As mentioned in the preliminary chapter (p. 32), in former times the war-like spirit seems to have been little developed amongst Thonga. The primitive population possessed no iron weapons, and the invasions which took place from the XVth to the XVIIIth century seem to have been peaceful. Conquerors and subjects soon intermarried and no recollection of bloody contests remained. When clans fought against each other, in those remote times, namely before the arrival of the Zulu (1820), they thought to have done doughty deeds when two of three warriors had been killed and the vanquishers returned home saying: "None of the enemy is left!!" The army used to form in straight line, not in circle, as was the case later on under Zulu influence.

When the cruel hordes of Manukosi subjugated the plain of Delagoa, all that was changed. Of course the Thonga yimpis were defeated very easily. First of all, those of Maputju and Tembe; in the country of Matjolo, which was afterwards invaded, the chief Mashekane was so stout that he had been surnamed "Mitahomu ni timhondjo" - "the one who swallows an ox, horns and all"... He fought bravely but was also defeated. In Khosen, says Hendrick, an old man who stayed for years in Rikatla and who was then a child, the aborigines were deceived by the perpendicular sticks which the Ba-Ngoni invaders had fixed to their ox-hide shields: they mistook them for reeds and thought they could break them easily; but their three united yimpis, that of Khosen under Mbanyele, of Rikotsho under

Makwakwa, and of Shiburi under Shitlhama, were repulsed, broken through by the Zulu phalanx.

These Zulus or Ngonis taught the tribes of the plain a system of war much more cruel then the old one: "kill everything", — such is the rule. No exception is made except in the case of women who are taken prisoners. The Thonga clans readily accepted this new mode of fighting. They adopted the Zulu system wholesale and the proof of it is that all their military terminology is pure Zulu. Their apprenticeship already began during the invasion: the Ba-Ngoni seeing that the Thonga had a certain aptness for war, incorporated them with their own regiments and used to send them forward to the attack, as previously mentioned. They praised them by calling them the *Mabuyandlela* — those who prepare the way, — a kind of nickname which Thonga have kept to this date and of which they were very proud.

However I do not think it would be unfair to the Thonga to assert that the old peaceful basis of their character is still preserved, notwithstanding this influence. We have had the opportunity of judging of their warlike capabilities during the war of 1894-1896 with the Portuguese. (See Appendix VII, Short account of two South African wars.) The Natives did not fight from choice. If some of them gave proof of great endurance, if the army fought in some cases with a certain tenacity, Thongas and especially Ba-Ronga, did not show themselves to be very able warriors. Want of discipline, mutual distrust, timidity resulting in frequent retreats, inability to follow up their successes, such were the main causes of their defeat. The wild soldiers of Maputju, who considered themselves the equals of the genuine Zulu, showed their courage only when there was no danger!

B. WAR COSTUME AND WEAPONS

One day when we were comfortably seated under the beautiful tree at our station of Rikatla, a strange looking monster

suddenly appeared on the scene, running towards us! The children fled and the women hid themselves... It was Charley, our milk-man, who, with some other warriors was going to a military review, to be held by his chief Mahazule. He approached us, a giant of 6 ft. in height, decked out in a costume which was certainly grotesque, but of which I, at once, caught the general idea: he had evidently tried to look like a wild animal and had succeeded admirably in the attempt. Such is most likely the origin of the war costume in mankind! As for Charley, he was thoroughly delighted to note the terrorising effect produced by his appearance on the youngsters and folks of weak nerves.

He was, admittedly, the handsomest warrior in our locality, and condescended on one occasion to allow us to photograph him, when he explained in detail the several component parts of his costume, which, as a whole, was certainly formidable! The photograph was a failure but the get-up has remained imprinted on my memory.

To commence with the top: the head was decorated with three plumes of long slender feathers, taken from a bird called *sakabonyi*, the widow bird, which is only to be found in the mountains; sometimes the feathers ot other birds are added (magalu, mafukwana); one of these plumes is worn in the centre, the others one on each side and are all three fixed on to a conical helmet (shintlontlo) trimmed with ostrich feathers. This helmet is set on a kind of toque of other skin, which is held in place by a chin-strap. This style of head gear makes the head look about twice the natural size, and, to give it a still more ferocious appearance, it is adorned here and there with porcupine quills.

Round his neck Charley wore a necklace of plaited thongs of black calf skin (tinkocho). Armlets of long white ox hairs, carefully selected from the tail, ornamented his biceps, and garters of a similar make were on the calves of his legs.

The belt around his loins was very rich, the beautiful skin of a civet cat (nsimba), with its fine yellow stripes, hanging down in front to the middle of his thighs, and small antelopes'skins be-

hind (madjobo ya nhlengane). Finally, to complete the wild animal appearance, calves and ankles were covered with bracelets of large black seeds, which come from the North (timbavu), each seed being as large as a cherry. The size of the legs is thus considerably increased and conveys the idea of a pachyderm; when he jumped heavily or stamped his feet on the ground, it sounded like the tread of an elephant.

This costume is a warm one, and the warrior carries a sort of bone curry-comb, made of the rib of an ox, shaped and sharpened, which he uses to scrape the perspiration from his face and body, when taking violent exercice or indulging in the dances descriptive if his prowess. Such is the native pocket-handkerchief!

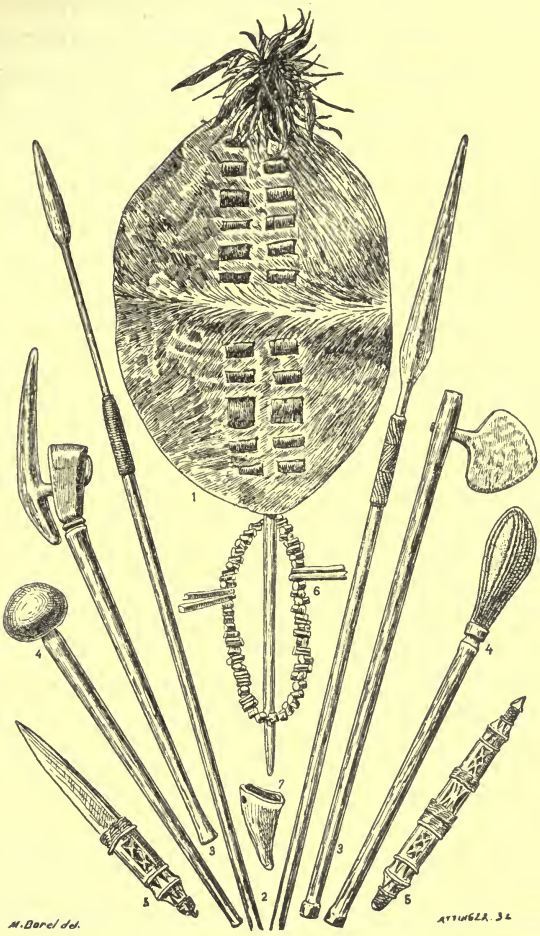
The several component parts of the war-dress are kept in a little hut raised on poles, near the owner's dwelling, and are carefully looked after, being frequently dusted and exposed to the sun to preserve them from moths and weevils. A complete uniform is worth several pounds sterling!

Arms, among the Ba-Ronga are of a very primitive kind, those of most ancient date being doubtless the *club* (nhonga) and the *knobkerrie* (gungwe) (1) of which two specimens are given in the accompanying illustration (N° 4). The native never journeys without his stick using it to kill snakes, should any cross his paths and, should fortune smile on him, to knock over any quail that may rise at his feet. In quarrels or in war time this *nhonga* can be a dangerous weapon. The stick with the fluted head comes, I am told, from Bilen, and it seems that this style is in much favour in Gaza. It may have a phallic signification.

But the most formidable weapon of the South African Black is the *assagai* (tlhari, fumo (N° 2), of which there are two kinds; the larger (likhalo) consisting of a sharp, pointed, double edged steel blade, fixed on to a stick with iron or brass wire, and the smaller (tindjombi) with a blade of the size of our arrow-head, fas-

(1) These sticks were given to me as dentistry fees for extractions of decayed teeth!

tened to the handle with strips of bark or of palm leaves. The former is for hand-to-hand combat and the warrior never



THONGA WEAPONS

1. Shield ; 2. Assagais ; 3. Battle axes ;
4. Knobkerries ; 5. Dagger ; 6 and 7. Necklace
and little horn worn by men slayers.

releases his hold of it, while the latter — of which three or four may be held in the hand when entering the fight — are

thrown at the enemy from a distance. (1) The length of the large assagai on the right of the illustration is as follows : Blade 14 inches ; binding of iron wire, 4 1/2 inches and handle 34 1/2 inches. The small one, on the left, measures : blade 7 in. iron stem adjoining blade 7 in., binding of palm leaves 5 in. and handle 35 1/2 inches. As previously mentioned, the handle of the large sized assagai is broken at the warriors' death, being " he ", or his defilement ; but the blade " never dies ". It belongs to the chief, as does also the shield, and the son will inherit it. During the warrior's life, it is kept in the hut of his *first wife*. She is called the owner (nwingi) of the assagai. It is taboo for the other wives to touch it : another fact which shows the special position of the first wife. (Comp. p. 273).

Another weapon, in more restricted use and which can also be employed for cutting wood, is the *axe* or *hatchet*, of which I have met with two descriptions (N° 3) : the blade (mbimbi) can be narrow and elongated -- it is then called shingwatane, — or broad and rounded, — when it is the shiyema. These hatchets are firmly inserted in their wooden handles like the axes of the lake-dwellers. European manufacturers now export a considerable number of semicircular hatchets, similar to the one on the right in my illustration, to Delagoa. The one here portrayed will be at once recognised as being of Native make. I may also mention the big *knives* (mikwa), a sort of sword : one sometimes meets brawny fellows, walking about the paths armed with these dangerous looking implements ! However they are quite inoffensive.

I managed to obtain from a traveller a beautiful *dagger* which he was carrying slung across his breast ; it is a rare specimen and comes, I am told, from the Ba-Ndjao tribe (N° 5). The sheath is made of two pieces of wood, artistically carved and

(1) I once had an opportunity to observe the effects of the assagai. A young evangelist of our Mission was suprised on the railway line by some Zihlahla warriors in ambush during the 1894 war, and was transfixed at one blow. (7 th January 1895). He had fallen on his knees and the wretches struck him in the back : the assagai was only prevented from going right through his body by a note book which he was carrying in the breast pocket of his coat.

fastened together with a plait of iron wire ; it is slightly hollowed out to allow the blade to enter : this is firmly fixed in the handle through which it passes from end to end, coming out at the extremity, where it is bent back and thus held tightly in place. Ba-Pedi in the Zoutpansberg, also make similar knives.

Finally, when the warrior holds in one hand his large assagai, in the other will he found his *shield* (shitlhangu) (N° 1), which he grasps by the stick around which this piece of defensive armour pivots. The Thonga shield is made like that of the Zulu, of a piece of ox-hide, oval in shape and of varying size, sometimes all of one colour and sometimes variegated. (The several battalions in the Chaka army were distinguished by differently coloured shields). On either side of the central line, from top to bottom, two parallel rows of small square incisions are made (magabela) through which are run strips of hide of a different colour, the effect being a series of oblongs. By an ingenious device the ends of these strips are so tied at the back of the shield as to form several sheath-like nooses into which is inserted the stick by which it is held. The space between the two lines of oblongs is called the back (nhlana) of the shield. The nooses or sheaths are four or six in number : two or three at the top, and two or three at the bottom, a space being left in the middle, where the warrior grasps the stick. This stick tends to strengthen the shield, but, being merely passed through the nooses, it acts also as a pivot around which it can turn ; it is this pivoting action which gives to the shield its chief value as a protection. An assagai (usually thrown with considerable strength) would easily penetrate the ox-hide, but when it strikes the shield, the force of the impact causes it to pivot and the weapon is deflected to one side : should it strike exactly in the middle, it would hit the stick, break it and lose all further impetus. It is hardly necessary to add that the *shitlangu* of the South African Black is absolutely useless when opposed to bullets ; it was invented to protect the warrior against the dreaded assagai, at a time when firearms were not yet thought of !

During the last century the Ba-Ronga have begun to use

guns for hunting and also for war. Although the sale of fire-arms to the natives has been often prohibited, the Ba-Ronga were reported to possess several hundreds of rifles at the commencement of the 1894 war, and also to have been fairly proficient in their use... very different from the Madagascans who removed the sights from the guns on the score that they were in the way when taking aim !

C. THE MOBILISATION OF THE ARMY

In the Zihlahla country, when the chief wanted to muster his forces, he did so by means of the *shipalapala*, this rudimentary trumpet which I described in the preceding chapter. A swift messenger (shigidjimi) ran from village to village, blowing this instrument ; when he was tired he passed it on to some other good runner, who carried the summons further afield ; he ran and ran until he was exhausted, when he handed the trumpet to a third, and so on until the whole country had been reached.

At the sound of the well-known call of the shipalapala, the warriors shout : " A hi hlomen ! " — " to arms ! " They at once put on their war costumes and repair to the capital.

In Nondwane all the sub-chiefs possessed their shipalapala, and each of them summoned his own people. There the shipalapala mostly sounded to call for dances and for feasts. When the army was mobilised merely to discuss matters quietly, messengers ran through the country shouting : " Mayivonoule ! " — " take the shields ! "..., to which the warriors answered : " A hi hlomen ! " — " to arms ! " The messenger had to go quickly. " He did not lose time in grinding tobacco" : he only indicated the time when the army was expected in the capital.

Should matters have been more serious, should an hostile yimpi have invaded the territory, every one can give the alarm (tlhabela mukhosi), shouting : " Yi ngeeneeeeeee ! " " It has entered ! " (viz., the hostile army has invaded our territory). All the women flee away and the men run to the capital.

D. THE MUKHUMBI, THE CIRCLE OF WARRIORS

Dressed out like wild animals, the warriors hasten with all speed to the chief's village, where the regiments muster. The army(1) is divided into a certain number of *battalions*, *mabotshu*, or *meboko*, all men of about the same age forming a *botshu*. The *botshu* itself is made up of several *companies*, *mitlawa* or *mabandla*, and can therefore vary very much in numbers.

In the army of Matjolo there were nine battalions commencing with that composed of youths from sixteen to twenty years old, up to that of "crown men" (makehla) and the grey-head who where still capable of handling an assagai; for every able-bodied man is a soldier and makes it a point of honour to join the army when it is mobilised. In the Zihlahla clan, the battalions of young men were called *Megajlela* and also *Ndumakazulu*, "the one who is celebrated as far as Zululand", surname of the chief Nwamantibyane. After them came the *Nyonibovu*, *Giva*, *Malwabo*, *Djanungwana*.

Mankhelu, the Commander of the Nkuna yimpi, gave me the names of his battalions and the explanation of them. The old men formed the regiment called *Mamphondo*, those of the horns. Some of them used to tie a horn on their forehead; they imitated the rhinoceros or the buffalo. The following regiment was the *Mamphisi* (timhisi), the hyenas; then the *Machoni*, the sea-birds, a kind of duck, very swift; then the *Timbulwane*, a sort kind of lynx, the *Mafakubi*, representing the Ndakazi antelope and, lastly, the most numerous regiment, the *Dhlanazo*, "those who eat with others (dya na bu)". Each regiment has, as we shall see, its own war-cry, in which it imitates the animal whose name it bears.

When all have reached the capital the first procedure is the "formation of the circle", in Thonga: *biya mukhumbi*, to fence

(1) Yimpi (pl. tiyimpi) in Thonga corresponds to impi in Zulu.

the circle or *aka mukkumbi*, to build the circle. This is accomplished in the Zihlahla army by a special summons which I might call " the order to fall in". Heralds scatter in all directions, enter the huts, approach the groups encamped around the capital, and shout in a high and monotonous key the following Zulu words. It will be noticed that the formula given is that which was made use of by the heralds in the Mpfumo clan during the war of 1894.

Izwana! Otyo ndjalo, Muvelu, (1)
Be nga m'thandi ba ka Nkupane,
Umta'ka Sihlahla esikulu si ka Hamule,
Malobola ge dyoze e bulandin ka Mbukwana.

Listen! This is what Nwamantibyane says,
He whom the people of Nkupane do not love, (2)
The son of the Great Forest (Sihlahla) of Hamule, (3)
He who took a wife and used the sword in the country of his parents-in-law, in Mbukwane's country.

Gwalagwala a libuvu,
Ilihlengo ngo kubekeka,
Umpathi we sibamo,
U za ku debula Mangole ni Maputukizi.

(1) Muvelu, the Zulu surname for Nwamantibyane.

(2) The people of Nkupane are one of the younger branches of the royal family of Mpfumo. They lived close to Lourenço Marques, on the other slope of the hill, to the West of the town. They would have liked undoubtedly, in common with many others, to have asserted their independance by throwing off the yoke of the elder branch, and even attempted to do so when Mahombole tried, in 1867 or in 1869, to overthrow Zihlahla. But the elder branch, whose chiefs were energetic men, succeeded in maintaining its authority over the whole clan. The fact the that people of Nkupane "do not love" Nwamantibyane resounds rather to the credit of the latter.

(3) Nwamantibyane's father was Zihlahla, his grandfather was Hamule. Sihlahla, or Zihlahla, in Zulu, means forest, hence the herald's play on the word. The reign of Zihlahla, which we may place at from 1867 to 1883, was very troubled, at least during its first few years. The young chief, on his return from Natal, at the death of his father Hamule, married Mbilwana, a princess of the royal family of Mabota. During the bloody wars then raging, Zihlahla was angry with Mabota (whose chief was Mbukwana), for playing him false, and, one fine day, he made a raid into the country of his parents-in-law, killing many people. To have thus treated his "bakoñwana", who are ordinarily held in such great respect, (see Part II) was a proof of valour which is remembered to this day, more than thirty years after the event. It must be said that, after this exploit, Zihlahla left his residence near the town and took

The royal bird with red plumage (1),
Magnificent to contemplate,
He who holds in his hand a gun
With which he will fire on the Angolese and the Portuguese.

Nduma kuti, lo wa khiti,
Mo nga ngesilwana,
U ti ka: a yi funule!

He whose fame spreads afar, our chief,
Who is as a wild beast,
It is he who says: "To arms!".

This final exclamation, prolonged and finishing abruptly on the last syllable, carries a long distance : all the warriors jump to their feet and, brandishing their assagais and shields, run to the chief's village, where the circle is to be formed. Each regiment, with its counsellors at its head, is called in turn by the organisers of the army; (at Zihlahla they were Mahagane, the chief's uncle, and Mpompi), and the several companies of the regiments form ranks one behind the other. I have already described this imposing circle, when treating of the coronation of the chief. Every warrior can take in at a glance the entire assemblage. Seen from the interior, it is an unbroken circle of shields, resting perpendicularly on the ground, and all in touch; behind, a crowd of men; the greater the number, the deeper the ranks: a forest of feathers waving above the heads.

The mukhumbi is not however a perfect circle. It is rather like a *horse shoe*, as there remains an *opening* (nyangwa or sangwa), which gives access into it. On either side of this *door* the regiment of the young men takes up position: the Dhlanazo in the Nkuna mukhumbi and the Ndumakazulu in that of Zihlahla. At the opposite end, facing the entrance, is the *chest of the army* (shifuba sha yimpi), where the chief stands surrounded by

refuge in the Nwamba territory; the Whites with whom he was fighting, put a certain Nwayeye in his place whose name we shall find in a war song to which we shall have occasion to refer later on.

(1) The nkulunkulu is a bird which is shot in the forest on the borders of the Nkomati; its feathers are red, and only chiefs are allowed to wear them.

the men of riper age, the strongest of whom act as a body guard. Between the chest and the opening, on both sides, the middle-aged warriors occupy the wings, the elder ones nearer the chest, the younger ones nearer the entrance. This disposition is highly significative: notice that it is exactly the same as that of the village itself: a large door (mharana); on both sides of the entrance, the huts of unmarried inhabitants (lao and nhanga); at the back, the huts of the headman, and, on the sides, those of his younger brothers. The idea of age and of hierarchy entirely dominates both these social manifestations!

As regards the numerical strength of the mukhumbi, one of my informants who belonged to the Ndumakazulu regiment — young men from 19 to 25 years old — told me that he estimated the war strength of his regiment at about 500 men: the entire Zihlahla circle might be put at 2000 strong.

I have often seen the Nkuna mukhumbi assembled. I had even the opportunity of addressing its warriors during the Sikororo war of 1901. They were between five and six hundred in all. But this clan is very much scattered and many warriors were not present.

Before going into battle, certain rites have to be accomplished. In order to stimulate a war-like courage and to imbue the warrior's minds with a certainty of victory, it is necessary to proceed to the performance of the war-songs (guba), of the war dances (gila), and to administer the medicine which will render the soldiers invulnerable.

E. WAR SONGS

The performance of war songs is called *guba*. I have already fully described the Zihlahla national song, which would seem to be more adapted to celebrate a coronation than to serve as an incentive to battle: it is however used indiscriminately for both purposes.

Another war-song which is very popular in the Mpfumo clan is the following:

Zulu : U ngwa si mu thini, Mayeye ?
U banga muhlaba, u bulala bantu !
Ronga : U ta ku mu yini, Ñwyeye ?
U banga ntlhaba, u dlaya bhanu !
What will you succeed in doing to him. Nwayeye ?
You take the country and slay the people !

This is a question addressed to Nwayeye, the rival of the chief Zihlahla; Nwayeye was put in his place near Lourenço Marques by the Portuguese between 1860 and 1870. He accepted the position but was unable to retain it any length of time, and the recollection of his failure is perpetuated in this song which is intended to extol the royal family of Mpfumo.

A third song, also in vogue with the Mpfumo warriors, runs thus :

Zulu : Zi m' thini ? A ba ze zi ba bona. abantu bezizwe !
Ronga : Hi ta ku yini ? A ba te hi ba bona, bhanu ba matiko !
What shall we say ? Let them come and let us see them, the people of the enemy's country !

This is a defiance hurled at the adversaries.

In Nondwane, they also sing this last song ; another runs as follows :

Zulu : Ngambala ! ngi file...O..o..o.. Zinkomo zito !
Ronga : Nwamboten, ndji file ! O..o..o.. Tihomu teru !
My friend ! I am killed. Oh ! oh ! oh ! Our oxen !

The warriors doubtless refer to the ruin which would be entailed, were the enemy to carry off their cattle, and thus they encourage one another to fight stubbornly !

Another Ronga song performed in the guba ceremony is this :

Zia yi khalelo muhlu ya se mananga
We are weeping for the giraffe of the desert.

The giraffe may be the chief of the clan whom the warriors are determined to protect, or the enemy's chief whom they will go and kill ?

This song is also one of the great guba songs of the Nkuna

clan, but the words are slightly different. I have collected two others:

Hi yi kwa makhosi!
Si phuma ka makhosi. Si gambuza!
U mkhonto use sandhleni, Eji! Eji!
U mkhonto usao gobee....

War comes from the chiefs!
It is ordered by the chiefs! We go and kill!
The spear is in our hands! Eji! Eji!
The spear kills and bends in the wound!

The oldest of the Nkuna guba songs, which was already in use before the arrival of Manukosi, in the begining of the XIXth century, when the army still formed in line and not in circle, runs as follows:

Hi bo yima, hi bo yima!
Mi teka burena mi nyika tinuba (?) ta mbabe.
Let us stand fast, let us stand fast!
Do not let your strength go, it would help the enemy to conquer.

The words of this song are Thonga, as the Zulu had not yet imposed their terminology on the Thonga yimpi.

One of the finest war songs is that sung in the armies of Maputju and Tembe, an antiphon seemingly very ancient, which changes from the minor to the major, producing a truly grandiose effect:

"At break of day", sings the solist,....
"Who was it that crowned thee, Muwai, king of Maputju?" reply the warriors.

Muwai is the great great grandfather of the chief Mabai deposed in 1896. He reigned at the close of the XVIIIth century, his son Makasana having been chief from 1800 to 1850. Muwai is compared to the rising sun, or at least the song recalls his coronation which must have taken place very early in the morning, at daybreak. It is evidently in praise of the royal family that the entire army chants this glorious souvenir.

Loko ku ti qa, loko ku ti qa
U bekwe ngubane Muwai?

Muwai ka Mabudu ! Muwai ka Mabudu !
U bekwe ngubane ?

At day break — At day break
Who was it that crwoned thee, Muwai ?
Muwai, king of Mapute ! Muwai, king of Mapute
Who was it that crowned thee ?

As one sees, the war songs are tolerably short : a declamation of three or four words by a solist (musimi) who dances in the middle of the circle, and a chorus sung by all the warriors, stamping their feet on the ground and striking their shields with their assagais. (Hence the exclamation "Eji" found at the close of some sentences). Or sometimes the whole throng brandish the assagai in a rythmical fashion, raising it first to the right, then to the left, afterwards inclining it to the side, and lastly downwards as if to pierce....

When the great war-induna wants the song to stop, he gives a signal. At once all the shields are elevated and a sibilant murmur runs through the ranks: shi-shi-shi-shi, or a special click : nqu-nqu-nqu. Hence the verb *nqunquzela*, to stop a war song.

And then the war dance will take place.

F. THE WAR DANCE

The *guba* is already a kind of war dance, as dancing does not mean a change in the dancer's position. Nodding with the heads, gesticulation of the hands and slow motions of the feet are already a dance (kina). In some guba songs, there may be a going and coming of all the warriors who widen or narrow their circle. I have even seen men crossing the mukhumbi, two by two, or three by three, during the guba.

But the true war-dance is the *gila* (Ro.) or *giya* (Dj.) the representation of deeds of valour by warriors who have killed an enemy in battle. The massed chorus of the guba is most imposing, but still more deeply does the *gila* impress one by its wildness. Look at this elderly man who suddenly detaches

himself from the circle, stamping with all his might on the ground. His feet beat the earth in cadence, one blow being long, the three following ones short : – ∪ ∪ ∪. He goes on, making the ground shake, brandishing his weapons with all his strength, perspiring from his efforts and pronouncing Zulu words which the throng interrupts by wild shoutings, as if to encourage him... Then he returns to his place and the whole army concludes the performance by a kind of whistling : zu... iiiiii. ..... prolonged on a high and piercing note, which suddenly descends to a deep and guttural tone : i. aaaaa..... He has hardly resumed his place in the ranks when a young man springs into the circle, jumping like an antelope, holding his assagai and gesticulating all the while, as if transfixing an invisible enemy. His eyes are glaring as if he were a wild beast, and immediately the army entones a song, his song, the one which has been composed to glorify his deed. Possibly his return to the ranks will be greeted by another shout : I..a...Nda-u ! — Lion !, comparing him to a lion returning to his forest and which nobody will dare to attack. The encouragement given by the warriors to the *bagili* and their great final cry are called *khuza* or *khunzela*.

"At that very moment", says Mankhelu, "the hearts of the young men tremble in their breasts ! Their hair stands on end... An extraordinary war spirit comes over them all"... And every one having witnessed those performances in the Thonga or Zulu mukhumbi will confess that they are wonderfully impressive. It is a mixture of dramatic, epic and lyric poetry, three literary *genres* which are still confounded, the whole being enhanced by a deep, wild music and subject to the laws of a certain artistic style.

The fighting instincts are excited to the highest pitch by these patriotic choruses and dramatic representations. Thus should the troops be slow in making a start, the young men go dancing to the chief and beg him to "grant them permission" to go forth and slay, or rather to "give them men" to slaughter (ku nyika). The native idea appears to be that the chief holds the lives of the enemies in his hands : without his permission they

cannot go forward, but, this once given, they rush enthusiastically to the fray. They even go so far as to taunt him with being an old woman, a coward, because he will not let them go at once. (1)

When the excitement has reached the culminating point, and it has been definitely decided to fight, the time has arrived for the magic treatment by which the warriors will be rendered invulnerable.

G. *Administering the war-medicine.*

This custom is probably of ancient origin, but I have reason to believe that, amongst the Ba-Ronga, it was practised without any great formality until the advent of the Zulu influence when it was brought into much greater prominence and invested with more solemnity. "Drinking the war-medicine" took place on several occasions during the revolt of 1894 to 1895. At *Zihlahla* this potion was administered to all warriors before the rebel attack on the town of the 14 th October 1894; also prior to the ambuscade in the outskirts of Lourenço Marques, on the 7th January 1895, and before the battle of Morakwen, the 2nd February following. According to my informant, the chief doctor of the army prepared the medicine in a huge dish with leaves and roots cut into slices. These ingredients possessed an effervescent quality; the medicine-man stirred up the decoction and with it sprinkled the whole army formed in a circle. After this every warrior was fully persuaded that he was invulnerable, that the bullets would be deflected on either side of him, or, even should they hit him, they would flatten against his body and fall harmless to the ground. The charm could only be broken by the warrior turning his back to the foe. Then the bullets might pass through him. I have met

(1) Gungunyana, on one occasion, when his warriors were importuning him with similar requests, sent the more ardent spirits to wage war unarmed against the wild beasts, and I was told they actually succeeded in capturing a leopard alive and brought it back to the chief!

with very intelligent natives who were perfectly convinced of this fact, although open to reasonable argument on all other points. They told me that certain natives who were bowled over by grapeshot, picked themselves up after the fight, came to life again, or rather regained consciousness and then, with their fingers, extracted the bullets which had all remained imbedded in the skin !

A *Nondwane* warrior described to me, in the following terms, the administering of the magic potion, as it was done on the 7th January 1895 before the battle of Morakwene. The whole army was assembled at Nkanyen, on the bank of the Nkomati. It was there that the magician prepared the medicine, with two young girls as assistants. While he was brewing the mixture and making it froth, the soldiers formed in a semi-circle, looked on standing erect, poising their assagais on a level with their heads. Then a *ntshopfa* was cut down (the shrub of oblivion, often employed by Native doctors and of which we have already noted the use in other ceremonials) and a branch laid across the road. The several battalions were called up, one after the other, and every man had to jump over the branch and take a mouthful of the medicine which he spat out again, pronouncing the sacramental *tsu* which accompanies the offerings made to the gods : he subsequently went off, running and dancing and getting ready to go forth and kill. When each one had taken his share of the medicine and it was all finished, the doctor said to them : " Now I have given you all my strength ; go and slay ". They crossed the river at night and having reached the left bank, at a point about ten kilometers from the Portuguese camp at Morakwene, they were made to observe the strictest silence for a long time. Then they felt that valour (burena) had taken possession of them !

Amongst the Ba-Nkuna the war-medicine is also administered under the form of *sprinkling*. This sprinkling may take place in time of peace, when danger threatens. The chief kills a black ox, the army summoned to the capital is sprinkled and eats the flesh of the ox. This will make the country ready for any eventuality. But the ceremony is much more serious when

war is at hand. Then the "great medicine of the country", carefully kept in the calabashes of the Court magicians, is mixed with *psanyi* of slaughtered sheep and with white sand taken from the river. During the night, the mukhumbi is formed and all the men sit down, their heads bowed over their knees, their eyes closed, in perfect silence. Then one of the queens, an old woman who has no longer any sexual relations, enters the circle, absolutely naked. She dips a leafy branch into the magical infusion and marches all round, inside and outside, sprinkling all the warriors and muttering the following words : "Kill them, break their pots, kill their dogs, catch their chief, bring him here, bring so-and-so and so-and-so". The warriors tremble with emotion. They pray to their gods in a low tone : "Save-me ! Help me !" But none of them dares to raise his eyes ! They know quite well that they would die !

It is extremely important that the officiating woman should be old and have had no sexual relations for a long time, or " the assagais would loose their strength ; the masculine weapons would become blind and the feminine weapons alone would see... The woman would have untied the knot of the assagai; she would cross the way (tjemakanya) of the great medicine... She must be a quiet woman (a rula) " (Mankhelu).

Similar customs exist in *Maputju* where the medicine is called " the medicine of hatred ", — that which dispels all natural feeling and makes a man capable of killing his fellow-man ! I give the particulars of this curious medicament as I have them from one of the natives of the country : no fewer than seven acts in this grand performance of " preparation for battle ".

a) In the first place when the chief foresees that a campaign is imminent, he has water drawn, and all the necessary ingredients gathered together : then he goes into retirement for one month, during which he is busy preparing the medicine with the magician who knows all about the recipe.

b) At the end of this time the entire army is summoned to the capital. A bull is brought out before the assembled soldiers and the chief strikes it on the head with a stick : this

infuriates the animal which must be caught and thrown down by the men unarmed ; the chief then approaches and kills it with an axe. They dismember the carcase, cutting off the flesh in strips which they cook in a large battered pot, stirring it with their assagais and pouring into it at the same time " the medicine of hatred ".

c) On this day the army is mustered and formed in the circle. The Commander-in-Chief takes the meat, cuts it into small pieces and mixes with it certain human ingredients : a finger, taken from a hostile petty chief killed in battle has been carefully preserved; the dried up phalange is scraped and the bone dust thus obtained is mixed with the medicine. This additional ingredient is to prevent any feeling of remorse, any prickings of conscience: " ku susa lipfalo ", literally " to remove the diaphragm ", the seat of the conscience, in the Ronga idea. (See later on a more probable explanation of this rite). The Commander-in-Chief takes the pieces of meat thus seasoned and throws them into the mouths of the soldiers, who must not touch them with their hands. The food must be recieved between the teeth ; any meat falling on the ground is picked up by the children.

d) On the following day, the whole army proceeds to a large lake (the lake of Shika, near the village of Nhlampfukazi) to be treated with another medicine, an emetic. This is placed on a skin in the middle of the lake : the skin is withdrawn, leaving the particles of the drug floating on the water ; each warrior must stoop down and swallow a mouthful of the emetic. He will vomit yesterday's meat : " fear will be thrown up and valour will remain " (ku hlantiwile butoya, ku sele burena). The chief having meanwhile taken up his position on a neighbouring hill, the several regiments rush towards him, surround him and beg now to be sent as soon as possible to fight and to slay.

e) But, before this can be done, the chief returns to the capital, the army following him. A double trial must still be undergone. A large broom is made of small branches of trees soaked in fat from sheep's tails and fire is then put to it. The

chief walks round carrying his flaming torch, passing it rapidly before the faces of the warriors formed in a circle. Some of the helmets catch fire and the wearers are promptly ordered to fall out of ranks. The chief addresses them in angry tones : " Deliver up to me ", he says, " the charms you are concealing ! T'is only I, the chief, who may possess enchanted drugs. You certainly have some, as your plumes took fire... Look at the other warriors ; the feathers on their heads are not burnt! " This trial is probably a means of frightening suspected traitors or of expelling wizards (baloyi).

f) All shields are now " presented " all round the circle. The chief bends back the point of an assagai and with it strikes each shield, but not with sufficient force to pierce it .. This " consecration " of the shields will doubtless make them a more secure protection against the enemy's weapons.

g) Lastly the series is closed by the " aspersion ". A mortar is produced in which are soaking some leaves ; these are stirred round in water and the chief sprinkles the whole army. This is the last act. The chief remains at home : the warriors thus fortified and protected against all dangers start on their expedition.

This last act only is performed in the clans of Shirindja, Nwamba and Zihlahla.

H. ON THE WAR PATH. THE BATTLE. STRATEGY. PANICS. RETURN HOME.

The *mukhumbi* has been " built " for the last time. Proclamations have all been issued. Nothing remains but to start.

This *starting of the army* (ku thethwa) is also made according to prescribed rites. I once witnessed it, when the Nkuna army went to Sikororo's country on a kind of punitive expedition. The great ndjuna of the army, the Commander-in-Chief, Mankhelu, his stern face more crabbed than ever, holding a hyena's tail in his hand, clad in a white shirt which

was very little in keeping with the whole appearance of the mukhumbi, stepped inside the large circle and raised his tail... Then the *Dhlanayo*, the young bloods, ran towards him shouting: " Kwe-kwe-kwe ! " Their cry is the same as that of the *Timbulwanà* (lynx), their elders, who came next. Mankhelu pointed the tail in a certain direction and these two regiments started. The *Mafakubi* came in their turn, imitating the galop of the antelopes : " tshwi-tshwi-tshwi ! gwu gwu... hwu, hwu !... eka-ka-ka-ka "... and finally shouting: " N'ta dya na man " — "with whom shall I eat it ? " — a strange sentence which might be, as previously mentioned, a reminiscence of a totemic period ! (See page 339)... The *Matsyoni*, the sea-birds, followed shouting " tswe-tswe-tswe ", the *Mamphondo*, those of the horn, came shouting " tshuba-tshuba-tshuba " and imitating buffalos and rhinoceroses. The *Maphisi* started last howling wildly like hyenas : " hum-hum-hum... "

If the field of battle is far away, if there is a long march to be made, special *marching songs* are sung on the road. The most impressive is the following one : a solist sings in a very high key :

Abafo ! — The enemy !

and the whole army answers in a rich and melodious melody :

Enena-a-a ! a-a ! — Here they are !

All the shields are held straight, ready to meet the foe.
Here are two other marching songs :

Nangu moya wa tshisizwe !
We are the fire which burns the country ?

Inkonyana ya ndlopfu inhlezio baen...
The calf of the elephant is exposed on the plain...

This means the chief who is in danger ! Let us protect and deliver him.

As regards the *order of the march*, the battalions of the young men, stationed on either side of the entrance, go first : they form the advanced guard, the post of greatest danger. The

scouts, tinhlori (Dj.) tinhloli (Ro.), go in front ; each company has its leader to whom these scouts bring reports. It is the duty of the young men to surround the position to be carried and to make the assault. The two sides of the circle then follow, and lastly the chest of the army, forming the rear guard. The chief thus brings up the rear, protected by the battalions of veterans. But generally the chief does not go to battle ; he remains at home.

During the campaign, *the whole clan is subjected to many taboos*. Those who remain at home must *keep quiet* (rula). No noise must be heard in the villages. The women must not close the doors of the huts. It is taboo : their husbands might meet with misfortune (shibiti). They might want strength to run away. Fire must be lit in the huts in the evening, in order that the warriors may "have light" where they are. It is taboo to omit this precaution. Work in the fields must be more or less suspended ; women may attend to it in the morning only, before the heat of the day, while the air is still fresh. "Then, if a warrior has stepped on a thorn, the thorn will be cool (titimeta) ; if he has knocked against a stump, the stump will be quiet and not hurt him. (Mboza)." Old men who remain home must keep watch, and if they see a messenger coming, they follow him to the chief. Should he bring bad news, they do not inform women, as it is taboo to mourn over warriors killed in war before the return of the army. A fine is imposed upon those who contravene this law. It is taboo also to have sexual relations, as long as the army is on the war-path. This would cause thorns to hurt the warriors and they would be defeated. (Mankhelu).

According to Mankhelu, the mukhumbi may be again formed when arriving in the proximity of the hostile army. The battalions will be sent one after the other by the great ndjuna who will watch the progress of the fight If he sees his men giving way, he "pours" (tshelela) new companies to help those who are fighting until they rush the position (gwabula) and put the enemy to flight. Then the pursuit begins. The dust flies up to heaven ! The vanquishers follow their enemies until they

reach their villages. As a rule, *they kill every one*, women, children, old men and tired warriors who have been unable to run away. They take the oxen and burn the huts. However exceptions are made in some instances: Sigaole, the ally of the Whites, ordered his warriors to spare the lives of the people of Zihlahla, during the expedition of February 1895 and to take them prisoners instead. "If you find any inhabitants remaining in the villages" said he "go into them. Let some one draw a line on the ground around the village and forbid the soldiers to cross it and to massacre the people". Generally speaking, however, the only lives spared are those of the younger women and girls of whom they can hope to make some profit, either by taking them as wives or selling them to others for matrimonial purposes. These prisoners are called "heads" (tinhloko) (1). It is the only kind of slavery practised by our tribe. Such wives are not ill treated, as a rule.

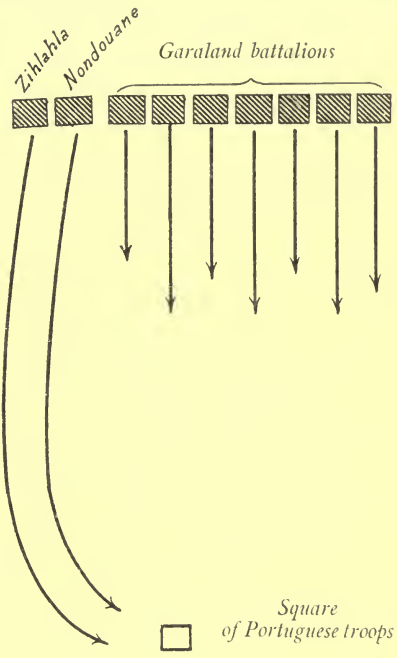
So far I have described war-customs of the Natives when fighting with each other. Let me add some particulars borrowed from the Thonga-Portuguese war of 1894-1896 (App. VII.) which throw some light on the Native ways of fighting against White people.

* * *

When opposed to White troops, the attack en masse would be too dangerous: regiments advancing in serried ranks would offer too good a target to the European artillery. From information I have gathered with reference to the battle of Makupe or Magule (Sept. 8 1895), it would appear that the Ba-Ronga advanced in skirmishing order, those provided with guns approaching very close to the lines of the Whites. During this fight, one of the most important of the whole campaign, the Portuguese Commanding Officer, M. F. d'Andrade, shewed great presence of mind: the Zihlahla and Nondwane warriors came into almost actual contact with the Portuguese

(1) Two women, members of our Church, were carried off in this way by some of the Zihlahla men (6th October 1894), and we had the greatest trouble in finding them. They were seized close to the town, while going to their food-stores and their captors had duly married them with the acquiescence of their chief.

square, whilst the Gaza regiments, which were in greatly superior force, remained at a distance and then retreated. They had been told by Gungunyane that they were not to kill White men, so their presence was a mere parade. The Ba-Ronga finding themselves thus deserted followed the same tactics! One of the warriors present on this occasion drew me a plan of the engagement on the floor of a hut! (See the adjoining sketch).



On the whole it must be admitted that the Natives of these parts seem greatly to prefer surprise attacks, sudden descents upon peaceful and unsuspecting folk, to any kind of regular pitched battle.

The Swazi used to arrive in the Delagoa plain very early in the morning, surrounded the villages and massacred indiscriminately all the inhabitants, in the years 1860-1870. The Ngoni of Gungunyane adopted the same method. The Matjolo warriors, whom the Portuguese sent against Zihlahla in February 1895, encamped in perfect silence within one hour's march of the spot where Nwamantibyane had taken refuge (Nhlalalene) and attacked his people when they least expected them. They indulged in the pleasure of killing numbers of women and children, whilst their male enemies fled into the palm marshes shouting vociferously: "Make ready your rope to climb up to heaven... There will be no more rest on earth for you! Cook three meals: you may eat two but never a third". Empty threats! The greater part of the Native fights during this war consisted in ambuscades and treacherous slaughterings: lots of noise, plenty of bluster, but not much real bravery.

We shall arrive at the same estimate of native valour if we consider *the great campaign* planned by Gungunyane in concert with Zihlahla and Mahazule, who had taken refuge in Gaza, during July-August 1895.

Nine regiments, representing a large effective force, were to start from Manzimehlope, the country beyond the Nkomati River; three of these were to ascend the left bank of the river, to cross it in the neighbourhood of Komati-Poort and to enter Swaziland. the Ngoni chief having made alliance with the Swazis. The other regiments were to cross the Nkomati to the West of the Sabie, and thence to go southward by Moveni. The remaining three, with whom were incorporated Zihlahla and Mahazule, were to ravage Shirindja, Ntimane and Nondwane, passing about one hour's march to the West of Lourenço Marques, exterminating the inhabitants of Matjolo (allies of the Whites), whose retreat on the town would be thus cut off... The nine regiment were to effect a junction at a place called Nkobotlwene, to the South of the Bay, where the forces of Gungunyane would fraternise with those of Maputju, with whom they were on good terms. For the space of seven months, tens of thousands of those warriors were to overrun the country and to annihilate all the tribes opposed to Gungunyane. The chief would not massacre the Whites, nor would he attack their town: he calculated on rendering them powerless by depriving them of the assistance of their Black allies, and expected them thus to sue for peace on honourable terms! Such, at least, was the plan of campaign which transpired after Gungunyane had been made prisoner, in the centre of his own country of Gaza, by a party of about forty white soldiers! The whole thing culminated in a single day's skirmish in the Ntimane country. The petty chiefs quarrelled amongst themselves; only a few hardy warriors dared to cross the Nkomati and slaughtered some women at a short distance from the outpost of Chinabane. Finding themselves discovered, they at once recrossed the river and made off to the Northward.

The principal causes of the incapacity in military matters, so noticeable amongst the Blacks during the war of 1894-1896, are doubtless the *internal jealousies* between the tribes and also, it must be said, the mysterious dread inspired by the White race, their artillery and their superior discipline.

The feeling of mistrust existing between Matjolo and Nwamba, Nondwane, Zihlahla and Shirindja, also explains the terrible *panics* which occured during the military operations. On several occasions the Native forces were subject to panics which might have entailed the most serious results. As an instance, I relate the following which nearly led to the partial destruction of the Matjolo army. The Matjolo warriors, as also those of Nwamba, had received orders from the

Whites, at the end of January 1895, to attack Zihlahla and Mahazule. One of the young men of Matjolo, who was present during the operations, told me this story: "We were to have joined the men of Nwamba at a village called Mukapan, but did not find them at the rendez-vous. As they had made common cause with Zihlahla, at the begining of the revolt, we had not much confidence in them. It looked as if they were in hiding and intended to attack us treacherously and kill us At this time two panics occured. The first was at Hukwen, when a man dreamt that he was being killed, and cried out : " Yo ! Uwe ! There are people who are killing me "! It was pitch dark. Every one jumped to his feet. Some ran to hide in the forest, but others shouted : " The enemies are there ! " Fighting began in the regiment of Geba, (composed of men of the same age as Sigaole, the chief), but no one was killed A few individuals who kept their presence of mind restored order, but we came very nearly exterminating each other ! The next night a Chopi of our troop had a fright, and cried out: — Why do you want to kill me, you men of Matjolo ? I will tell Sigaole's mother". He was promptly secured and forced to keep quiet for fear that he would rouse the Nondwane people, etc." A similar panic seized the troops of Mahazule, when they went to lay waste the country round Lourenço Marques (October 1894).

To avoid, as much as possible, these panics the Ba-Ronga arrange a *password* before starting on an expedition. I was able to learn two of these countersigns, after the war, by questioning some young men who had taken part in certain military operations. On one occasion the pass-word was as folllows: " Be ge pi" ? These are Zulu words signifying : " What are you looking at" ? The requisite answer being : " Be ge pezulu " – " We are looking at the sky". In the famous attack made by the Zihlahla warriors on the town of Lourenço Marques, on 14th October 1894, the word was: " U landu bane ?" — " With whom have you a quarrel ? "—and the reply: " Ngi landa Mlungu ! " — " I have a quarrel with the White man "!

Return from the battle. When a yimpi has been defeated in battle, but is not pursued by the enemy, it returns silently and disperses before reaching the capital, each warrior going back ashamed to his village. Mourning takes place in the village of the deceased. But much lamenting is not allowed. It may be that the chief will prohibit any mourning if many have been killed, " because the whole country would mourn : — they have

not been killed by the mat (likuku) at home, but by the assagai on the battle-field army! They are men!! If any one weeps he will have to pay £ 2 ". (Mboza).

When the Maputju yimpis fought against Nondwane in 1876, in the battle which took place near Malangotiba. (3 km west of Rikatla). they were decimated and eventually repulsed. Their chief Musongi sent them back to fight again. They refused. Then he chastised them in the following way: he condemned them to go and fetch water with pots, as women, but they had to go on their knees to the pool, saying: "It is the result of our cowardice" — (Ngi ndaba ya bugwala). Afterwards they had to extinguish a bush fire with their hands, and came home very much scorched and burnt.

When the yimpi is victorious, the return is marked by important songs called *hubu* (cl. dji-ma). The regiments follow each other, each singing his own *hubu* and they at once build the mukhumbi when they reach the village of the chief. They dance, dance their doughty deeds. Suddenly silence is required; the counsellors narrate to the chief how the fighting has proceeded and tell him the names of those who have killed enemies, those who have struck the first blow and their *bahlomuri*, viz., those who transfixed the leg and the arm. After which the heroes "gila" to their heart's content, together with the bahlomuri. They are proud! They are applauded! They are the great men of the day, the *tingwaza*, the saviours of the chief!

This leads me to consider the very curious customs connected with the slayers and the slain on the battle-field.

I. THE FATE OF THE SLAIN AND THE TREATMENT OF THE SLAYERS

1. *The fate of the slain.*

When a man has slain an enemy, he has covered himself with the most enviable glory: he has the right to perform the war

dance before the chief. He takes away all the garments from the dead body which remains quite nude; should the slain be a Pedi wearing the piece of skin called nsindo round his genitalia, the slayer takes it with him as a proof that he has killed a man. A second warrior passing the enemy dying, or dead will transfix (hlomula) his arm. A third passing will pierce his leg. These two last will not have done so meritorious a deed as the first one: they have not slain but merely finished off (huhula) the enemy. They act as witnesses to the first man, who is the actual possessor of the corpse; they acquire, however, an equal right to dance: they are the *bahlomuri* of the real slayer. Should a fourth man pass by and again stab the dead, he is credited with no glory at all.

Besides the stabbing in the arm and leg, the dead bodies of enemies are subjected to still further *mutilations*; they are ripped open and eventually disembowelled, an operation designated by the Zulu word "qanza". This revolting custom seems to be carried out in a more complete way amongst the Ba-Pedi than amongst the Thonga. In the battle of Nov. 6 1901, when the Sikororo and Sekukuni forces were repulsed by Maaghe and Muhlaba at Shiluvane, when forty foes were killed (App. VII), their corpses disappeared entirely, cut into pieces by the medicine men of the victorious clan; magicians from all Zoutpansberg came and asked to buy parts of the slain in order to prepare their powerful charms. In fact, in their opinion, the flesh and blood of an enemy killed in battle is the most efficacious of all charms and makes a *first rate drug* called *murumelo*. This medicine is also used for other purposes: with it the seeds are smeared in order to ensure a good harvest. When the mealies are two feet high, the magician ties together leaves on stems at the four corners of the field, after having treated them with the drug; the blacksmiths from the Iron Mountain of Zoutpansberg buy it and mix it with their mineral ore, in order to strengthen the iron which they melt in their furnaces (nonisa nsimbi). Without this help they would obtain but slag. The hunters inoculate themselves with the powder obtained from the tendons and the bones in the following way: they make incisions in the skin

of their wrists and elbows, draw a little blood, mix it with the drug, cook both in a pot, expose their arrows, assagais to the smoke, and rub the incisions with the powder. They will then be able to aim straight (See also Note 13.) The powder specially prepared from the tendons of slain enemies will be spread on the paths during future wars; foes marching on it unknowingly will suddenly become unable to walk and will easily be killed.

The Zulu are said to have the same customs as the Pedi

I cannot guarantee that all the Thonga clans follow all these customs. The Nkuna magicians, in old times, before they were influenced by their Pedi neighbours, used to dissect the tendons of the back (riringa) of the slain enemy, which they smeared with his medulla and hung it to the shields of the warriors... Enemies seing those shields would "tjemeka nhlana" – "have their backs broken", a figurative expression which means to be terror stricken. A part of the body was also preserved and mixed with the war-medicine; the idea which underlies this custom being evidently this: when you have eaten the flesh o your enemies, you have absorbed all their strength and they are unable to do you any further harm. (1) We have seen that the "mbhulo", the "nyokwekulu", all these powerful "medicines of the country" carefully kept in each clan, contain a little human flesh. These drugs are used as protective war medicines: it is most probably owing to the same principle.

(1) This custom is the only remnant of anthropophagy remaining amongst the Thonga, and I wonder if this superstition is not the true explanation of the origin of cannibalism. Where cannibalism still prevails, as amongst the Fañ of the Congo, I am told that the bodies eaten are generally those of hostile clans, or occasionally that of a wife (who belongs to another clan according to the laws of exogamy). Is it not probable that, in the beginning, these feasts had a ritual and military value similar to that which we find in the administering of the war-medicine in South African tribes. In the course of time, the Fañ acquired taste for human flesh and ate it for their own pleasure. Dealing with anthropophagy, I must not forget that it occured in several instances in South Africa after the devastation brought about by the Zulu expeditions of 1820-1830. In Zoutpansberg, in the mountains of Drakensberg, Natives reduced to starvation began to eat their fellow men. This also happened in the Bokhakha during the reign of Queen Male. (See Part IV.)

II. *The treatment of the slayers.*

To have killed an enemy on the battle-field entails an immense glory for the slayers ; but that glory is fraught with great danger. They have killed.... So they are exposed to the mysterious and deadly influence of the *nuru* and must consequently undergo a medical treatment. What is the *nuru ? Nuru*, the spirit of the slain which tries to take its revenge on the slayer. It haunts him and may drive him into insanity : his eyes swell, protrude and become inflamed. He will lose his head, be attacked by giddiness (ndzululwan) and the thirst for blood may lead him to fall upon members of his own family and to stab them with his assagay. To prevent such misfortunes, a special medication is required : the slayers must *lurulula tiyimpi ta bu*, take away the nuru of their sanguinary expedition. (Lurulula comes from ruru, plur. miluru or vice-versa. (1)

1) We have met for the first time with the notion of *nuru* à propos of the rite of luma (p. 372) ; we shall find it again when dealing with hunting customs (Part IV). It is one of the few typically animistic ideas of the Thonga. The nuru is to be feared not only in slain enemies but in connexion with any human corpse and even with dead animals. As a proof, I may quote the following curious story which Spoon told me and of the truth of which he was fully convinced : A traveller died under the great fig-tree of Libombo (near Rikatla) . He had climbed on the tree and fallen on his own stick, which he had planted in the ground He was not buried, as no one knew him. So his corpse fell into decomposition on the spot ; his skull became white. Later on a bush fire burnt all the grass and the skull was seen for years " saying mpha " (it was shining), the teeth " saying bva " (descriptive adverb, same meaning). One day the boys of Libombo went to pick wild figs from the tree and again saw the skull : the fire had just passed again ; Spoon was one of them. " We beat it with our sticks and amused ourselves by rolling it over as a ball. We did not know it was a human skull.. Having gone home, we began to be seized by the drunkenness of nuru, the disease of those who have killed a man. During the night we were delirious (hanta-hanteka), our eyes swelled and were full of exudations (malanga), the four of us, Tsukela, Tlabin, Sibakuze and myself. Next morning my uncle went to the fig-tree and saw we had killed a man there ! The medicine-man who understands the treatment of nuru, Dudela, who had been a slayer in war, called us to his village.

In what consists this treatment? The slayers must remain for some days at the capital. They are taboo. They put on old clothes, eat with special spoons, because their hands are "hot" and off special plates (mireko) and broken pots. They are forbidden to drink water. Their food must be cold. The chief kills oxen for them (yi ba lumisa hi tihomu); but if the meat were hot it would make them swell internally "because they are hot themselves, they are defiled (ba na nsila)". If they eat hot food, the defilement would enter into them. "They are black (ntima). This black must be removed» (Mankhelu). During all this time sexual relations are absolutely forbidden to them. They must not go home, to their wives. In former times the Ba-Ronga used to tatoo them with special marks from one eyebrow to the other. Dreadful medicines were inoculated in the incisions and there remained pimples "which gave them the appearance of a buffulo when it frowns". (1)

After some days a medicine-man comes to purify them (ku ba phutula), "to remove their black". There seem to be various means of doing it, according to Mankhelu. Seeds of all kinds are put into a broken pot and roasted, together with drugs and *psanyi* of a goat. The slayers inhale the smoke which emanates from the pot. They put their hands into the mixture and rub their limbs with it, (ba tilula) especially the joints.

Viguet describes this last act thus :— Pieces of medicinal roots

We stood in a line before him ; he poured a little of his powder in the hands of each one of us, took a little in his mouth, rubbed his forehead. Then he insulted us saying: "You will die! Who began beating that skull?" Each of us denied having given the first blow. Then he said : "Take care! Do not go any more there neither near that nkuhlu tree where another corpse has been burnt under the leaves! Go away".

When a man has murdered another in a scuffle, he can replace this nuru medicine by his own urine. He must drink a little of it and rub his forehead with it. The giddines will pass away. If the murder has been committed from a distance, as with a gun, the nuru is not so much to be feared, as the enemy was far away. A little of the medicine will be sufficient to treat the murderer. Spoon is ignorant of the composition of the nuru drug.

(1) Hence an expression which is still of common use. When a Ronga wants to defy some one he says to him : "You are a coward! If you say you can tackle me come and kiss my forehead".

are put in the broken pot and roasted. They inhale the smoke. Then cow's milk is poured into the pot on the embers and, when it boils, they have to put their fingers into it, one hand after the other, and pass them across their lips emitting the sacramental: "tsu" (which proves that it is a sacrifice to the gods, a religious act). Afterwards they say: " Phee! phee!" — viz., phephela phansi, (Dj. tikela hansi), " go down, sink ". This means: " May you go deep into the earth, you, my enemy and not come back to torment me ". The last part of the treatment consists in rubbing the biceps, the legs, and the whole body with this milk. The medicinal embers are carefully collected, and reduced to a powder; this will be put into small bags of skin called *tintebe* which the slayer will wear round his neck. They contain the medicine of the slayers of men. At bukanye time they can use it to *luma*, viz., to season the first calabash they drink (See page 372). For this purpose it is as good as the great mbhulo, " the medicine of the country", provided by the chief, and it will prevent them attacking their own people under the influence of drink. The *tintebe* will also be helpful in future battles. Insanity threatening those who shed blood might begin early. So, already on the battle field, just after their deed, warriors are given a preventive dose of the medicine by those who have killed on previous occasions and who wear tintebe.

The period of seclusion having been concluded by the final purification, all the implements (mizilo) used by the slayers during these days, and their old garments, are tied together and hung by a string to a tree, at some distance from the capital, where they are left to rot. (1)

Having reached their homes, the slayers have still to complete the cure by chewing a piece of root called monungwane every morning and evening, and spitting it out in the direction of the rising or the setting sun with the same exclamation:

(1) I had the good luck to find those which were used for the purification of the slayers after the Mooudi fight during the Sikororo war and they are now in the Ethnographical Museum of Neuchâtel. They consists of half a dozen old calabashes, a pair of sandals, etc.

" Phee ! phee ! " — " Go down, sink ! " The piece of root is tied to the assagay (1).

* *
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During the weeks following the battle heroes do not only wear the tintebe ; besides these miluru amulets, the conquerors have the right to wear certain trophies. These are in the first place antelope or even goat's horns which they pierce at the base ; they thread a string through the hole thus made and tie them round the neck (See illustrations, p. 32 and 427). They also make necklaces of small pieces of wood, notched in a peculiar manner and burnt in the fire ; a hole is made through these and they are strung together like beads and worn round the neck. Sometimes these necklaces are lengthened to such an extent that they are worn as a bandoleer. I recollect seeing the Matjolo warriors returning from their expedition of February 1895 : they came to show themselves off to the Whites at Lourenço Marques, gloriously proud of having massacred defenceless women and children whom they had suprised in the early hours of the morning! People threw them pieces of silver and they converted them into brandy !

J. SOME REMARKS ABOUT WAR RITES.

The war rites of the Thonga, whatever may be their origin and though they seem to be a mixture of old Thonga and of new Zulu customs, form a very interesting and complete whole.

(1) Purification customs for the warriors are somewhat different amongst the Pedi. After the Mooudi battle, the slayers of Maaghe's yimpi had to undergo the following medication : the heart of the slain having been torn out, the muscles of their faces sliced off, their limbs amputated, all these portions of human flesh mixed with drugs and ox-flesh were cooked in a pot, the assagais being used to stir the horrible broth. This was poured into a flat basket which it is taboo to touch : somebody draws it with a curved assagay as far as the middle of the square. Then the slayers having been previously whitewashed with clay, came on their knees, and, with vociferations or cries imitating vultures, they caught a piece of meat in their teeth, not touching it with their hands. Their wives are said to participate in this meal as being also contaminated by the defilement of their glorious husbands.

The most noticeable are the *national rites*. In war time, the very existence of the clan is threatened, because the Chief, the central and vital cell of this organism, is in danger. Hence the readiness of all the warriors to answer to the first call of the *shipalapala*, and to gather round him, " building the circle ", which protects him, the whole clan forming a single village and binding itself by the striking ceremonies of *guba*, by patriotic songs, to die for him. Notice that most of the *guba* songs extol the chief. All these customs in which the individual or the collective courage exalts itself, the *guba* and the *gila*, are national or social rites by which the clan works towards its own salvation. They owe their origin to the national idea.

But war also brings dangers to each warrior. Hence the *protective* rites of sprinkling the mukhumbi with the war-medicine of the clan, or of giving each man some of it to swallow. The rite is inspired by the notion *similia similibus curantur*, its idea being that the warrior having eaten a little of the enemy will become invulnerable to his blows.

But some other rites, especially the war taboos, seem to owe their origin to the *idea of passage*.

The *whole clan* enters a special phase as soon as war has been decided upon by the chief, " who gives it " to his warriors. Hence the taboos observed at home, many of which are exactly the same as those of the circumcision school and of the period of mourning. We notice the same contrast already so often mentioned : certain sexual interdictions are removed (e. g. a queen will enter quite naked into the mukhumbi !) On the other hand sexual relations, allowed in ordinary life, become taboo. This period of fighting seems really to be considered as a marginal period for the whole tribe.

It is so par excellence *for the warriors* and I think many of the rites imposed upon them find their explanation in that way. As we saw, the period of margin is generally preceded by separation rites. (See page 74). Some very characteristic ones are performed when the army starts: the leave-taking from the General with wild shouts, the custom of swallowing a piece of meat without touching it with the hands and taking an emetic afterwards, that of jumping over the ntchopfa branch, the medicine of oblivion ! etc The glorious return, the participation in the meat of oxen which have been taken, may be the aggregation ceremonies, viz., the acts by which the warriors return to their ordinary life.

Passage rites are still more distinct *in the case of the slayers*; but

their condition is worse, as it implies the idea of defilement following upon murder and is attended with the danger coming from the *nuru*. They are "hot" (an expression which also applies to the tabooed woman during her menses); they are "black" (an epithet which also designates the grave-diggers, the bereaved mother, etc.). Hence a *seclusion* much more complete, a true period of margin with many alimentary and sexual (1) taboos. Possibly the incisions on the brow are an old kind of tatooing in connexion with that marginal period, similar to the inguinal incision of the widows (p. 198). The purification rites are of the same kind as those of the mourners, especially of the grave-diggers. The aggregation to society, after their seclusion, is marked by rites of separation from the marginal period, which no doubt aim at getting rid of the defilement connected therewith. (Exposure of the *mizilo* outside the village in the bush). Is it not striking to notice the correspondence between these rites in their peculiar sequence and those of the circumcision school, of the mourning, of moving a village ?

CONCLUSIONS ON THE THIRD PART.

The new era, and the future of the South African tribe.

The great philosopher Aristoteles gave the following definition of man: "Man is a political animal"—*ξῶον πολίτικον*, by which words he rightly observed that man is not made to live alone, but in society. This definition is applicable to the Bantu as well as to any other human race: the family is the first of these social aggregates; the clan is the second. The Bantu are essentially a political race and no one could deny that they have invented a very interesting and practical political system, a system which wonderfully combines two opposite principles: the autocracy of the chief and the democratic spirit of the subjects. The Bantu citizens are truly citizens. They can sit on the hubo and give their advice in all the questions at stake, be they of a legislative, of a political, or of a judicial character. This age-old participation in the discussion of the affairs of the country

(1) The sexual taboos are so severe that, after the Mooudi battle, one of the slayers took great offence at a man who dared to touch his food, as the man was living in his home and had relations with his wife. The slayer was afraid that this contact might cause his own death or bring misfortune to his family.

has given them a sense of their importance, a gravity of speech and a dignity of manners which greatly impress an European visiting a typical Bantu village.

But this state of affairs is being modified very rapidly by the all powerful civilisation which invades South Africa from all parts as an irresistible tide. My description of the national life of the tribe, or clan, still applies to some parts of Thongaland; but the changes are coming so fast that soon it will have nothing more than an historic value. In some other parts of South Africa the old clan life has already totally disappeared.

If we have tried to foresee the future of the Bantu village, how much more serious is the question of the fate of the Bantu tribe? I do not think I can now pass it by without consideration, whatever may be the difficulties and the delicacy of what has been called the "Native problem".

Trying to find the direction in which the present evolution of the South African tribes tends, we must first consider what has thus far been the influence of European civilisation on the Native political life. We are here dealing with past and well ascertained facts.

The result of the meeting of Civilisation and the Bantu tribal life up to the present day.

a) Civilisation *has destroyed the military power* of the South African Bantu. Thirty years ago they could still fight against White people with some hope of success. Now their fighting power has been broken. They will always be able to kill a few White women, a few colonists settled amongst them, far away from the centres; they might obtain some occasional victories against a badly conducted reconnoitring party: they cannot withstand an European Commando provided with Maxime quick firing rifles and all the implements of modern warfare, be they ten times superior in numbers. The last Zulu rebellion has given a striking demonstration of this fact. The Zulu impi, with wonderful courage, rushed at the Whites with its assagais and its war songs. But six hundred of the natives were shot dead by the mitrailleuses before they could approach near enough to throw an assagay! As long as the Black race cannot fight with the White man on equal footing as regards weapons, it cannot hope to regain its military power, whatever may be its valour or its patriotism.

b) Having conquered the territory of South Africa, the White Go-

vernments have everywhere placed Native Commissioners to watch over their coloured subjects. This has put *an end to the tribal wars*. Natives are no longer allowed to indulge in their old fighting customs. They may avail themselves of a war between Europeans to square up old accounts with each other, as happened during the Anglo-Boer war, but they are forbidden to follow the war-path any more. In many parts of South Africa they have even been disarmed. This change, as a whole, is a favourable one. Native wars never brought blessings to the race. However it tends to destroy one of the springs of patriotism and, in this way, it impoverishes the Native mind.

c) These Native Commissioners have put a very effective check, not only upon the military tendencies of the tribe, but upon *the power of its chiefs*. The authority of the chief in the midst of the clan has certainly been diminished. In some instances he has been deposed, banished in consequence of war, and the tribe has remained without head and without force, emasculated as it were, unable to guide itself. As Mankhelu said : " Our chief is the forest into which we retreat ! Without him we are but women ! " This was sadly noticeable in the case of the Zihlahla or Mpfumo clan, which was perhaps the most developed of all the Ronga kingdoms and which suffered most from the 1894-96 war. Its young chief Nwamantibyane was caught, deported to some spot in Eastern Africa where he died, and the clan was dismembered, a great number of men emigrating to the Transvaal; the others remained dissatisfied but powerless in their old territory and were incorporated with Matjolo or Mabota.

Even when the Native chief is maintained in his position by the Whites, his power is curtailed. As a judge, he is no longer allowed to inflict capital punishment. His tribunal only judges minor cases and, besides and beyond him, there is a further appeal, the Court of the White Commissioner, which is ready to consider every important case. Should the Native chief be unjust or selfish in his decisions, the subjects will go more and more to the White tribunal. It may be their claims will not be so well understood as in their own *hubo*, but they will perhaps meet with fairer treatment. Shrewd and clever Native Commissioners thus succeed in attracting more applicants to their residences than the chief to his capital (1). This dual control leads to a progressive loosening of the tribal tie.

(1) This was the case, for instance in Nondwane. The unjust and egoistic rule of Mubvesha compelled many of his subjects to go " shikanekisen ", viz., to the Portuguese Administrator of Morakwen.

d) *Mission work*, now so wide-spread all over the country, leads to the same result. It infuses a new moral and religious ideal into the minds of the people. The old customs, the sacred superstitions, many articles of the native code, are rejected by the converts. They generally remain very submissive to the authority of their chief, pay their taxes, join the army, but, should the Authorities summon a "nyiwa", a gathering of the clan to smell out the witches, should statute labour be ordered for a Sunday, etc., their conscience does not allow them to obey. On the other hand Native converts, under their White missionary, generally form a Church which sometimes becomes a kind of *imperium in imperio*, subject to its own laws. This is the necessary consequence of bad, or immoral, heathen customs (beer-drinking, lobola, polygamy) of which the Christian ideal cannot approve. A deep gulf is thus created between Christians and heathens and this also weakens the tribal life.

The causes which have brought about this change will probably increase in power in the course of time. The process of individualism will go on ; so will consequently this process of destruction of the tribal tie, and we may confidently look forward to a moment when the clan will have lost its political cohesion and its members have become independent of any Native Authority.

e) Loss of the political sense. How must this eventuality be considered. It may present certain advantages over the old state of things, but, to my mind, it entails a distinct and most regrettable loss for the Natives. The political sense with the sense of responsibility, will have disappeared, and this sense is one of the most precious aids towards the building of character. Look to a gathering of old fashioned indunas discussing a question affecting the welfare of the tribe under the guidance of their chief ; compare it with an assembly of half civilised natives in a Town location, a low class tea-meeting, for instance, of men with no respect for any one, addicted to drink and immorality, having rejected the authority of White missionaries because they believe themselves to be so much better informed ! There was in the first gathering a dignity, a sense of duty, which you will hardly find in the second one...

It is no use, for us, White men, to curse the degenerate Native or to weep over the disappearance of the old restraints. Let us rather confess that we are in a great measure responsible for these results. We have interfered with the Bantu clan by taking away its independence ; we have deprived it of one of its character building features.

political responsibility. This must not be forgotten in the discussion of the Native problem. We have caused a loss and it is our duty to try to restore to the Native's mind that which we have unconsciously, perhaps inconsiderately, taken from it.

We can never be contented with having obtained unpaid labourers to work our farms or paid miners to dig our gold. It is a question of dignity on our part that our interference in the affairs of the Natives should never result in a deterioration of their moral status.

I know that I am here approaching the most difficult, the most contested, the most delicate of all the questions connected with the Native problem, viz., the question of political rights of the Natives, and I feel all my incompetence to deal with it. Should I be asked to suggest a solution of this vexed question, I would certainly refuse to do so. But I here consider it not as a political theoriser but as an ethnographer, who has come to the conclusion that the present state of things has impaired the character of a race and who honestly searches for a remedy.

2. How can we preserve the sense of political responsibility amongst South African natives ?

I am looking for a remedy... Is this remedy the universal bestowal of the franchise to every male native of twenty one years of age, who is a British subject and has been six months resident in the country ?

a) *The Native franchise.* For many decades the Native population of Cape Colony has been offered the right of voting for members of Parliament. Any Native possessing a certain education (able to write his own name), and a certain amount of property, or of revenue, can apply for the franchise. What has been the result of this generous policy ? Of the whole Native Cape population, only 8000 Bantu availed themselves of this opportunity. "They have exercised their privilege creditably and profitably", says the *Christian Express* of August 1908. They have fused into the two great political parties. No harm seems to have resulted for the country from the bestowal of this right on its Black population. A distinct progress has even been made. Travelling through Cape Colony, after Natal and the Transvaal, I have been struck by the difference in the manners and the demeanour of the Natives and in the way in which they were treated.

They look much more like citizens, actual citizens or virtual citizens, and the White men show them a consideration which they hardly meet with in other Colonies.

However the granting of the franchise is not the panacea for the evil which I am now considering. See how comparatively few Natives have availed themselves of it in the most advanced of the South African states! We know that statesmen from the other Colonies are very little disposed to follow the example of the Cape. Supposing however they should offer the franchise to coloured people all over the land, the great bulk of the Native population would be little helped by it. Qualifications required would probably be high and only a few would be able to avail themselves of the opportunity. Moreover the *uncivilised* men, who are still the great majority, could not make any use of it. How could they form an opinion as regards railway and mining questions, educational and economic problems which so greatly perplex our statesmen? How would they be able to decide between the attitude of progressists and conservatives and cast a reasoned and independent vote when electing members of Parliament? I could say the same of hundreds and thousands of *superficially educated* Natives. They know more or less how to read and write, but are absolutely unable to understand the tenth part of what is published in the "Star" or the "Argus", because their horizon is totally different from that of the White man, although they are perhaps not much inferior in intelligence to many European voters. To be able to write one's own name is not a sufficient qualification for taking part in the politics of the South African Union.

The Black race is now in a period of transition and nobody can foretell in which way and how far it will evolve. It is possible that, after one hundred or two hundred years, the South African Bantu will have reached such a level of education as will enable them to exercise normally full political rights. For the present it seems to me that the franchise must remain the privilege of the few of those thoroughly educated Zulus, Sutos, Thongas, who have reached the requisite level morally and intellectually. I think it would be a good and wise provision to offer it to them, subject to as high qualifications as may be deemed necessary: the franchise would be kept before them as an ideal accessible to the best representatives of the race all through South Africa. It would have its elevating effect on the whole Native population through them. But some other provisions must be made for the masses who cannot yet rise to such a high level, and who must

however cultivate political interests and discharge political duties *for the sake of their character*.

I think this provision ought to be twofold. To strengthen the tribal system where it is still working satisfactorily, and to grant them a sort of representation which would be able to protect Native interests in the South African Commonwealth.

b) Strengthening the tribal system. The great majority of South African Natives still live under the old tribal system, more or less amended by the dominating White government. In the Protectorates, which contain 700 000 souls, in Zululand etc., it is still in full force. In other countries chiefs have lost more of their power and the political activity of their subjects has diminished accordingly. Some dreamers would like tribalism to be absolutely abolished and the duality of control disappear at once by the absorption of the Chief in the Native Commissioner. This would be a mistake. As long as he is not an enfranchised citizen of the State, let the uncivilised Native remain a responsible member of his clan. Therefore let us not hasten the death of clan life. If it must die, let it die a natural death... Individualism is growing every day. Moreover who knows if the Bantu tribe will not find means of adapting itself to the new condition of things ? It will be very interesting to watch the evolution of political life in the Protectorates, in Basutoland for instance, where the soil belongs to Natives and is inalienable, where the dangerous contact with White people is reduced to a minimum, but where civilisation and Christianity penetrate by leaps and bounds. Some chiefs have already been converted to Christianity, such as Khama in Bechuanaland ; and many others in the various tribes ; amongst them, in the Thonga tribe, Muhlaba, chief of the Nkuna clan. They generally adopt civilised customs, build good houses, buy mules and carriages. Let us suppose a certain number of these becoming thoroughly changed and being followed by the bulk of their subjects under the guidance of thoughtful White missionaries : could not the Bantu clan then evolve into some new, original, interesting political organism in which the blots of heathenism would have disappeared and a healthy national life would prevail ? The Bantu are not republicans but they are democrats. Why could their tribal system not get rid of its objectionable features, preserving only those which are compatible with Christian morals and civilisation ?

These are only questions which I put, and not definite opinions to which I commit myself. At any rate, if the tribal system must and

can be maintained for an unknown time, the Government ought to take some steps to ameliorate it, or at least to prevent its deterioration. It ought to pay a special attention first of all to the character of the chiefs. They are Government servants after all, ruling to a certain extent over British or Portuguese subjects. Moral qualifications ought to be required of them as well as of any other civil or judicial employee. Their conduct ought to be the more watched as the new conditions

Phot. H.-A. Junod.

Muhlaba's house (in the Thabina Location, N. E. Transvaal.)

under which they are placed are eminently dangerous for their morale. Under the old tribal law, their power was checked by the indunas ; they could even be deposed by a family council. Now the chief feels himself supported by the White Authorities and is tempted to take less care of the interests of his people. Many of them have become desperate drunkards. In some places they are allowed to get drink, which is absolutely refused to their subjects, and they sink deeply, morally speaking. This is a lamentable result indeed, and it kills the political life of the clan more surely than would the disappearance of the chief. If the tribal system is to be preserved at all, a strong and careful supervision must be exercised on the chiefs, and care taken that the indunas, and the people, retain that share of authority which original tribalism entrusted to them.

c) *Native representation*. It will not be sufficient, however, to create a fence, as high and strong as possible, round the Bantu clan in order to keep it alive until the native population is able to be enfranchised. Though South Africa is a country conquered and ruled by the White man, there are a great number of questions which equally concern both races. Natives pay taxes, high taxes, they contribute to the economic progress of the land, they provide the mines and agriculture with the indispensable manual labour. There are topics on which they ought to have a say and upon which the White Government ought not to decide without having heard their voice. In all legislation affecting them directly, or the use of the money levied on them, they ought to be consulted. They are not able yet to form a sound judgment on the politics of White South Africa, but they understand very well what concerns them, and so it would be but fair to give them means of expressing their opinion. This truth has been recognised to a certain extent. The Transkei has its Native Council and Natal has recently established a similar organisation. Lord Selborne, in his admirable address delivered before the Congregation of the University of the Cape on 27th February 1909, strongly insisted on the necessity of creating such Councils in all the districts, and we are glad to see that this idea, which was for a long time in the minds of many friends of the Natives, has been distinctly voiced by such a high authority.

These Councils ought to act, first, as Consultative bodies giving their advice each time that Parliament is proceeding to pass laws affecting the Natives. They might even be given the permission of expressing their views, eventually their complaints, in connection with the Native administration and their wishes for the welfare of their folk. Such Councils would act as a safety valve. Natives, when dissatisfied, are often contented if they have the opportunity of giving vent to their grievance, whatever may be the result of their remontrances. But this provision would render a still greater service : it would develop the political sense of the tribal natives, educate them on questions of general interest which concern the whole of the coloured population, and not only their own petty clan. So they would be gradually prepared for a time when the duality of authority will have disappeared, and when they will eventually become full citizens of the South African Commonwealth

If we open the way to the franchise to the fully educated and civilised members of the race, if we wisely control the uncivilised masses

still under tribal law, taking special care of the chiefs, educating their sons, fostering material, moral and intellectual progress amongst the clans, if we create everywhere Native Councils to afford them the opportunity of studying questions affecting the Native population, and of bringing Native opinion before Parliament, then we shall have done our best to restore that sense of political responsibility which we are now gradually destroying... We shall have done our duty in regard to the future of the South African Tribe.

What this future will be, no one can tell. It depends mostly on the Natives themselves... Everyone knows that the Act of Union contains a clause which greatly hurt the feelings of the educated Bantu of South Africa. When news reached their shores that the Act had been ratified by the House of Commons, without amendment, the colour-bar included, they expressed their deep sorrow, thinking that their race had been unjustly treated... But one of their papers published the following comment : "The Natives, men, women, and children, must bend their energies to the advancement of themselves in all that civilisation and true Christianity means, so that their claim to equality of treatment for all civilised British subjects may be irresistible..." Let this manly advice be followed by the whole Native population and there is still hope for the South African Tribe, whatever may be the modifications which it will undergo during the coming generations.

APPENDIX I (See p. 30)

Characteristics of the six dialects of the Thonga language.

In the adjoining table I have compiled a list of characteristic words in the six main dialects of the Thonga language. The Ronga and Djonga lists have been made by myself, and represent those dialects as spoken in the Mpfumo and Nkuna clans. The population South of Delagoa Bay speaks a kind of sub-dialect of the Ronga, the Lwandle or Maputju. (Abbr. Map.). I owe to the Rev. Perrin the peculiar forms found in that district. The Rev. P. Loze of Lourenço Marques compiled for me the list of the Hlanganu equivalents, as they are met with in the Nwamba clans. They are not very different from the Djonga ones. Probably the dialect of Hlanganu proper, in the Lebombo Hills, would show greater differences. The Rev. H. Guye, who resided in Khosen and in Shikumbane (Lower Limpopo Valley), provided me with a Djonga-Khosa list, very similar to the Nkuna one, and with the characteristic forms of the Bila dialect (Station of Shikumbane, 15 miles West of Chai-Chai), also of the Hlengwe as spoken in the Khambana District, on the Eastern border of the Lower Limpopo (Kh.). The Hlengwe, being so extensively spoken, possesses many sub-dialects. The Rev. S. Malale, a native minister, compiled the characteristic forms of the Tshauke (Tsh.) region and those of the Madzibi people (Madz.) dwelling in the hinterland of Inhambane. The American missionaries have already published many books in the Tswa sub-dialect spoken in the vicinity of Inhambane ; so I have also been able to mention a few Tswa forms. Lastly I owe to the same Rev. S. Malale the Ñwalungu forms, those of Maluleke as well as those of the Ba-ka-Baloyi (Bal.) proper, and, in addition, those of the Hlabi (Hl.), which are very similar to the Djonga.

The orthography employed in these lists is that which the Swiss missionaries adopted for the Vocabulary and Grammar of the Thonga-Shangaan language. (Bridel, Lausanne 1908). For our missionary books, we have always used the excellent and scientific system of Lepsius, with its two main principles : a letter must always have the

same value, and a single sound must be represented by a single letter. Unhappily this system implies the use of special signs which are not found in the ordinary printing offices, so we have had to adopt another conversational orthography for outside publications.

The *j* added to *t*, *d*, *r* and *sh* is not exactly the French *j*, but means a cerebralisation of the preceding sound. *Tj* is a *t* pronounced with the tip of the tongue bent somewhat backward, behind the palatal and towards the cerebral point. It is different from *tsh* which is *t* + *sh*, *sh* being the palatal *sh*, as in shore. *Dj* is not very different from the English *j* in just. *Rj* is a very much rolled *r*, tending towards the French *j* (as in jour); *shj* is a further deformation of *r* where all guttural element has disappeared : a palatal *sh* cerebralised. These four sounds are not the pure *cerebral* sounds mentioned by Lepsius. I prefer describing them as *cerebralised*. However, in Maluleke, *dj* sometimes becomes *dh*, as in the word mundhuku, and then it is pure cerebral. Besides the lateral sounds *hl*, *dl*, *tl*, very frequent in Thonga, there also occurs in Bila the Zulu *dhl*, which would perhaps be more correctly written *jl*.

Two peculiar sibilant sounds, *ps* and *bz*, (sw and zw in the Grammar) are accompanied by a special whistling. The *v̇* is not a proper *v*, which is very rare in Thonga and is only met with in the combination *bv*, and in the Hlengwe ngovu, vuna, etc. It is a soft *b*, a fricative labial. A strong *b* is rare in all the dialects, except after *m* or before *y*. In the Maputju sub-dialect alone it is frequently used instead of the soft *b*. *Ṅ* is the nasal guttural *n* pronounced as *ng* in singing ; it is the same sound as *ñ*.

The following comparison bears on three different subjects : the sounds, the grammatical forms and some characteristic words of the vocabulary. As regards sounds, notice especially the very interesting permutations of *r*, which find their explanation in the hypothesis of Meinhof on the Ur-Bantu. (Compare Meinhof, Grundrisse einer Lautlehre der Bantu Sprachen). This table will provide colonists with a shibboleth for the Thonga tribe, viz., with a means of ascertaining the origin of any Thonga with whom they may meet. They will be able to diagnose the clan to which he belongs. To understand it fully, it will be necessary to study the Ronga or Thonga grammars, to which I must refer the reader.

I. Phonetic permutations

		Ronga	Hlanganu	Djonga	Bila	N̆walungu	Hlengwe
r	Stone	rjibye (Map.) Djibye	ribye	ribye	ribye	ribye	ribye (Madz.) rige
	Three	rjarju (Map.) Shjashju	raru	raru	raru	raru	raru
	To till	djima	rima	rima	rima	rima	rima
	Tongue	lidjimi	ririmi	ririmi	lirimi	lerimi lorimi	lerimi lorimi
	Tongues	tindjimi	tirimi	tindjimi	tirimi	tindimi	tindimi (Madz.) tirimi
	Shadow	ntjhuti	ndjuti ndruti	ndjuti	ndzuti	nduti	ntsuti ndzuti
	Shadows	mintjhuti	mindjuti mindruti	miruti mindjuti	mindzuti	miruti minduti	mintsuti mindzuti miruti
	Ant-hill	rjuka (Map.) Shjuka	ruka	tjhuka	ruka	tshuka	ruka
	Mountain	nhaŭa	nhaŭa	ntjhaŭa	nthaŭa	ntshaŭa ntsaŭa	ntsaŭa
dj	Part	ndjima (Map.) ndima	ndjima	ndjima	ndzima	ndima	ndzima
	I	ndji (Map.) ndi	ndji ndri	ndj	ndzi	ndi	ndzi
	To morrow	Mundjuku (Map.) munduku	mundruku	mundjuku		mundhuku mendhuku	mundzuku
tj	To run	tjutjuma (Map) tshutshuma	tjutjuma	tjutjuma	tsutsuma	tsutsuma	tsutsuma
	Only	ntsena (Map.) mpsena	ntsena	ntsena (Hlabi) ntjena	ntse	ntsena	ntsena (Kh.) ntse
dy	To learn	dondja (Map.) donda	dyondja	dyondja	dyondza	dyonda	gondza
	To eat	da	dya	dya	dhla		ga
	Sun	dambu	dyambu	dyambu	dhlambo		gambo
by	Dog	mbyana	mbyana	mbyana	mbyana		gwana
	This grass	byanyi lebyi	byanhyi lebyi	byanyi lebyi	gwanye leli	byanyi lebyi byosi lebyi	gwanyi legi ganyi legi

y	To build	yaka	aka	aka	aka		aka
w	To warm oneself	worja	ora	ora	wora	ora	wora
hw	Moon	hweti	ńhweti	nhweti	ńhweti	ńhweti	ńhweti
hl	To-day	namunhla	namuntlha	namuntlha (Hl.) nyamuntlha	nyamuntlha	nyamunhla	nyamuntlha
hl	To-meet together	tlhangana	tlhangana	hlangana		hlangana tlhangana	tlhangana
v̌	To speak	v̌ulav̌ula (Map.) bulabula	v̌ulav̌ula	v̌ulav̌ula	v̌ulav̌ula	v̌ulav̌ula	v̌ulav̌ula (Madz.) walawula
v̌	To place	v̌eka (Map.) beka	v̌eka	v̌eka	v̌eka		v̌eka
	Belly	khurji (Map.) khudji	khuri	khwiri	khwiri	khwiri	(rumbu)
	To have a good taste	nandjika (Map.) nandiha	nandjiha	nandjiha	nandjika	nandiha	nandziha
	To have a bad smell	nuha		nuńhwa	nuńha		nunha
	Tail	nkila	ntshila	ntshila	ntshila	ntshila (Bal.) ntsila	ntshila ntsila
	To distribute food	khema	khema	phema (Hl.) khema	khema	phema	khema
	To be short	goma	koma	koma	koma	koma	koma
	Much	ngopfu	ngopfu	ngopfu	ngopfu	ngopfu	ngopfu (Tsh.) ngovu
	To help	pfuna	pfuna	pfuna	pfuna	pfuna	pfuna (Tsh.) vuna
	To dry up	phya		phya	khwa		khwa

II. Grammatical forms

cl. mu-v̌a	man	mhunu	muhu	munhu	munhu	munhu	munhu
	men	v̌hanu	v̌ahu	v̌anhu	v̌anhu	v̌anhu	v̌anhu
	stranger	muyeni	ńeni	ńeni		ńweni, neni	
cl. mu-mi	handle	mphinyi (Map.) mphinyu	mbhinyi	mbinyi	mbenyi	mbhinyi	mphyinyi
	fig-trees	minkuwa	minkuwa	mikuwa	mikuwa	mikuwa	mikuwa

		Ronga	Hlanganu	Djonga	Bila	N̈walungu	Hlengwe
cl. dji-ma	this land	tiko ledji	tiko leri	tiko leri	tiko leli	tiko ledyi (Bal.) leli	tiko legi
	of mine	dja nga	ra nga	ra mee	la mina	dva mina (Bal) la mina	ga mina
	of them	dja v̆u	ra v̆o	ra v̆oo	la v̆ona	dva v̆ona (Bal.) la vona	ga v̆ona
	that very one	djoledjo, djodjo	rolero, roro	rolero, rero	lolelo, lelo	dyoledyo. dyedyo lolelo, lolo	golego lolelo, lolo
cl. bu-ma	night	v̆usiku	v̆usiku	v̆usiku	wusiku	v̆usiku	wusiku
cl. shi-psi	limbs	psiro	psiro	psiro	psiro	psiro	psiro (Tsh.) bziro
	goat	ambuti	ambuti	embuti			ambuti
	one man	mhunu muńwe	muńwe	unwe	muńwe	wuńwe	
	large trees	mirji le'mikulu	le'yikulu	le'yikulu	le'yikulu	le'yikulu	
	nigh trees	ya ku leha	ya ku leha	yo leha	yo leha	yo leha (Bal) ya ku leha	
	a big (or old) man	mhunu lwe'nkulu		lo'kulu (Hl.) lo'nkulu	lwe'nkulu	lo'nkulu	
	three oxen	tihomu tirjarju	tiraru	tiraru tinharu	tinharu	tinharu	tinharu
	which day?	Siku djini ?	rihi ?	rihi ?		rihi ?	gihi ?
	the father alone	tatana pwsake (Map.) ha v̆upsakwe	e psakwe	yeshe	yeshe	yeshe	dadane yeshe (Tsh.) yetshe
	he has gone	a fambile	a	u	u	a	a Tsh. u
	I have taken him	ndji mu tekile	n'tekile	ńwe tekile	mu tekile	ńwe	mu
	we have seen him	hi mu v̆onile	m'monile	m'monile	mu v̆onile	mu	mu
	I love him	ndji mu rjandja		n'djandja	ndzi mu randza	ndi ńwe randa	ndza mu randza
	the trees are many	mirji mi tele	yi tele	yi	yi	yi	yi
	I have not gone	a ndji yanga	yanga	yange	yanga	yangi	yangi
	I was going	afa ndji ya	a ndji ya	a ndji ya	a ndzi ya	a ndi ya	a ndzi ya
	I would go	anha ndji ta ya	a ndji ta ya amfa ndji te ya	ngi ndji ta ya a ndji ta ya	ana ndzi ya	ingi ndi ta ya	a ndzi ta na ndzi ya
	the man	lw'a fambaka	lwe a fambaka	l'a fambaka	lw'a fambaka	l'a fambaka	lw'a fambaka

who will go	taka famba	nga ta famba	nga ta famba	nga ta famba	nga ta famba	nga ta famba
who does not go	nga fambikiki (Map.) fambikokoko	nga fambike	nga fambike	nga fambike	nga fambike	nga fambike (Tsh.) nga fambiko
who has not gone	nga fambangakiki (Map.) fambangakokoko		nga fambangike	nga fambangike	nga fambangike	nga fambangike (Tsh.) nga fambangiko (Tswa.) fambangikako
to be known	tibyiwa		tiv̌iwa	tiviwa		tigwa
though	nambi	nambi	hambi	hambi	hambi	hambi (Tswa.) hambu
whilst	kasi (Map.) nkansi	kasi	kasi	kasi	kasi	kasi (Tswa.) Kanilezi
as	psang'epsi	psanga hepsi	tane he lepsi	ku kota	tane he ku kota	ku kota

III. Vocabulary differences

To make	yentsha	endla	endla	endla	endla yendla	maha
To kill	dlaya	dlaya	dlaya	dhlaya	dlaya	dhlaya (Tsh.) daya
To hear	yingela	twa	twa	twa	twa	
To be happy	tjhava	thav̌a	tjaka	tsaka	tsaka	tsaka
To look for	djyula	lav̌a	la'a	lav̌a	lav̌a	lav̌a
A thing	sha-ntshumu	sha-ntshumu	shilo	shilo	shilo	shilo
To care for	bekisa	v̌ekisa	h ayisa	hlayisa	hlayisa	hlayisa
To trust	dumba	djyumba	tjemba	tsemba themba	themba (Bal.) psemba	themba (Tsh.) gwandza
Sea	likhulu	lwandle	lwandle	lwandle	lwandle	lwandle (Tswa) v̌imbi
Father!	tatana (Map.) tati	tatana	tatana	tatana	tatani	tatani
Mother!	mamana (Map.) mami	manana	manana	mamani	manani	mamani
Uterine nephew	mupsyana	muphyana	ntukulu	ntukulu	ntukulu	ntukulu (Tsh.) nzukulu
Maternal uncle	malume	malụme	kokwane	kokwane	kokwani	kokwani
Paternal aunt	rarana (Map.) rari	rarana	hahani	hahani	hahani	hahani
Bad	fani	ku biha	ku biha	ku biha		

APPENDIX II (See p. 38)

About Thonga names, nicknames and sirnames.

As an illustration of the way in which the Thongas change their names, here is the story of those of Mboza and Elias.

Mboza was called at his birth " Mulamule ", after his paternal uncle. The whole name was, in Zulu : " Mulamula nkwinzi izilwako ", viz., " the man who calms the bull which fights. " At the age of about sixteen, he changed it to Mahubula. At that time he was trying to gather divinatory bones in order to become a diviner. He had called one of these bones " Hubula ", and his comrades began to apply the name to him, after that ; he was seized by the " folly of gods " (Part. VI). When he was cured of this pretended possession, the spirit which made itself known called itself Mboza. This was the name of a man of his village, his own nephew, who had gone to Johannesburg and had died there. When he became a Christian, and was baptised, Mboza kept his name. Most of the Natives like to obtain another one on that occasion, the name of a disciple or of a prophet. We are not very ready to comply with their wish, as we have already too many Daniels, Jonas and Petros, and Mboza probably accepted this argument.

Elias was called "Shifenyo" on the day of his birth, after a man who happened to pass through the village. This visitor was a kind of beggar who used to follow people carrying food to the chief, hoping to get something to eat. The child was of a good family, but they gave him the name of this low and despised individual, a democratic act indeed ! When he was older, one of his friends said to him : " Your name does not suit you. Call yourself *Spoon*. " He adopted the new appellation, and the women of his village used to make fun of him saying : " Come along, we will distribute the food with this spoon ! " When baptised a Christian he became Elias, a name which is somewhat onerous, especially as our Elias is not as perfect and strong as a prophet ought to be... But Natives never shrink from assuming great names. They always feel themselves equal to them !

The names adopted at puberty by boys are very often European ones. There are scores of Jims, Sams, Bobs, etc. They also adopt as names European words or words of European origin, as : Spoon,

Nglazi (glass) Komitshi (cup), Djass (jacket), Fulitshi (fourrage), Fifteen, etc.

The really Native names very often begin with the prefix *mu* which is the personal singular prefix, (Musongi, Muzila, Mungutana, Mukentshe), or *Nwa* conveying the idea of " son of " (Ñwamitwa, Ñwamashwele. Ñwatjubula), or Nya used in the same sense, (Nyakubasa, Nyanise, Nyathi, probably of Zulu origin), or *Ma* which is also a personal prefix, (Manabe, Matende, Mathandana, Makhangala, Makasana, etc.). The prefix *Mi* means " daughter of ", and is frequently met with (Misilana, Mintlohen, Mindinyana, etc.). As a rule it is employed only in names of women.

The prefix *Shi* which generally denotes things, objects, and has a neutral meaning, is very often found in Ronga names. It is also a diminutive prefix especially when the word ends in *ana*. So Shiribyana, a very common name, means a small stone (ribye); Shigidana, Shirombe, Shindjubi, etc. belong to the same class.

Some very curious names begin with the prefix *ba*, the pronoun of the third person plural. These are common amongst girls, generally of Chopi origin, who were slaves of the great woman of Lourenço Marques and sold by them as concubines. For instance Bamuyeyisa means " they defy her ", Bamusonda (Zulu), " they hate her ", Batjhamahayena " they gossip about her ". etc. In calling themselves by these names the girls express their bitterness.

But a great number of names have no prefix at all and often no meaning.

Nicknames are frequent amongst the Thonga and often altogether supplant the regular name. There was in Rikatla an old Mbekwa whom everyone called Nxoko... Inquiring into the origin of this curious name I was told the following story : one day Mbekwa was very happy and expressed his contentment by the exclamation ; " Nxoko " (x here denotes a peculiar click of the tongue against the cheek). This interjection was received with favour and he employed it henceforth to manifest his pleasure on other occasions. He even made a regular verb of it, saying : " I go to nxokela in such and such a place ", viz. " to enjoy myself there ". The word was so taking that he was named after it, and I should not be surprised if it were incorporated into the current language, which is enriched every day by new descrtptive adverbs like nxoko. (See my Thonga Grammar, p. 84 and vol. II).

Nicknames are more especially applied to White people, as natives fail to catch their true names. These are very cleverly chosen, being

often a verbal description of the chief physical or mental characteristic of the White man. M. Torre do Valle has given a list of nicknames of the merchants and other inhabitants of Lourenço Marques in his Diccionario Shironga-Portuguez. It is well worth consulting, and the only thing wanting is the photograph of the White man and the explanation of the name ; it would be a splendid illustration of Native wit !

So far we have spoken only of *personal* names and nicknames. But, beside these, every man possesses his clan name, or sirname, viz., the name of the first of his known ancestors. Grown up men prefer being addressed by this name, which is *shibongo*, viz. the name by which they are " glorified ". This subject is treated in Part III. (p. 333).

APPENDIX III (See p. 265)

The story of Gidhlana Ngwetsa of Rikatla ; a typical case illustrating lobola, divorce, and leper customs of the Ba-Ronga.

Gudhlana was the sister of a man called Mubene. Both were the children of a nice old Ronga called Ngwetsa and of one of his wives. Gidhlana was bought with lobola by a man called Khandlela (candle), son of Nwamanghele, a man of the Manyisa clan settled near Rikatla. The marriage took place probably in 1893. The new pair did not live in peace. Gidhlana quarrelled with her husband. " Why ? Nobody knows ! Are matters of the huts and of the villages known to outsiders ?" She returned home to her father Ngwetsa. The husband waited a while. Then he followed her (landjela) and asked her to come back to the conjugal home. Her parents told her to obey. She went. But quarrelling soon recommenced. She fled a second time ; her husband, her parents-in-law did their best to induce her to go back. She refused. An uncle of hers took a stick and thrashed her. Nothing could persuade her. She stayed in her parents' village. In a neighbouring village dwelt a young man named Muzila, who was the chief of the Rikatla district (Page 355). He belonged to the Mazwaya clan, to the reigning family. He had two brothers, one of whom, called Gudu, was still a boy. This girl, Gidhlana, began to make friends with the boys of Muzila's village. Gudu sent a woman from the village of Ngwetsa to make proposals to Gidhlana (ku

mu wopseta). This woman made proposals on behalf of Gudu (a wopsetela Gudu). The girl agreed. But, in the meantime, Gudu started for Johannesburg and Gidhlana was abducted by the other brother, who took her to the village of Muzila; it was a case of marriage by theft (tlhuba) (See p. 120). Muzila was grieved at the conduct of these young men, and sent the girl to one of his counsellors to be watched by him and, going to Ngwetsa, her father, he said: "We have stolen your pot. Look for it in our village, the village of Mazwaya's people". Ngwetsa was greatly puzzled. The first husband had not yet claimed his money back; it was still in the hands of Ngwetsa and lo! the girl had already been taken by others! This was not right at all! They might have waited a little! All the men of Ngwetsa armed themselves and started as enemies (hi bulala) for the village of the thief. They killed a pig, entered the hut of the thief, took all his implements and made a heap of them on the square. The inhabitants all fled into the bush. But one of them came back with 10/. and said: "Have pity on us, please! We seize your legs! (khoma milenge, viz., ask for forgiveness). You know? To steal is a very old thing on earth!" "Yes, we know. The thief trusted his throat! (This is a proverb: he did not fear to swallow a large stone, thinking that his throat would be wide enough to let it pass!) He knew that he would have to pay this fine! All right! You are saved! Take the implements back into the hut".

The Ngwetsa people took away with them the flesh of the pig, but they sent one joint to the thief, so that he might eat it with his new wife. In this way they gave their consent to the marriage. "They gave him his wife".

But very soon afterwards the first husband, Khandlela, came to Ngwetsa to claim the lobola money, as the wife had gone. Gudu had gone to Johannesburg. Nothing was to be found in that quarter, The discussion began. Ngwetsa said: "All right; but 10/ of the lobola money must remain with us, for the fence of our village (lihlampfu)". This is generally done when a woman has been driven away by her husband. Sometimes he must forego as much as £ 1. or £ 2 of the lobolo, because he has not brought the woman back in peace. He has spoilt the fence of the village by ill-treating a girl coming from it. He must repair it with that money... Khandlela refused saying: "We have not driven her away! She went back of her own accord; you have even found a new husband for her!" What could the Ngwetsa people do? They had just used the lobolo of

Gidhlana to buy a wife for Mubene, her brother. The money had been already given to the Moyane clan from whom a girl had been chosen by Mubene. They consequently went to the Moyane people and asked them to return the money. But the Moyane said : " Your money has already gone further. We have used it to buy a girl of Madjieta for our son. We will go and fetch it ". So two projected marriages were prevented ; they would have been annulled, broken, had they been already concluded ! In this way Khandlela found his money !

Later on Gudu came back from Johannesburg and took Gidhlana as his wife. Hoping he had earned some money, the Nwgetsa went to him and said : " You have spoilt our flock (ntlhambi) " viz., the oxen which we hoped to get by the sale of our daughter. " Pay now " ! Muzila said to them. " Look at Shaputa ; we trust in her ! " Shaputa was a little girl, the sister of Gudu. Muzila proposed to Ngwetsa's people to consider her as theirs : " They would find money through her ". They consented to wait till she was of age. Some years elapsed. Muzila moved to the Mabota country with Gudu. Gidhlana was suddenly taken ill with leprosy and the disease made rapid progress. She died. Muzila, the master of the village, informed Ngwetsa Ngwetsa did not come to the burial, neither did any member of the family attend the funeral. Was it not leprosy ? Is not the contagion terrible for the members of the family ?... Other people can bury a leper. His relatives never. However they allowed their fear to go too far, for decency required that, in such a case, some relatives at least should go and witness the burial, even though they keep far away from the grave. Their behaviour greatly grieved Muzila and it entailed unexpected consequences !

Shaputa grew to be a young woman and a suiter, of the Hoñwana clan, came and bought her. The Ngwetsa heard of it and at once put in their claim. Muzila informed Gudu who was then staying near Lourenço Marques : " He fell on his back from the shock ! " (o gaa hi le ntjhaku !) and refused to pay. Muzila said to Ngwetsa : " You have foregone your claim, as you did not attend the funeral. Moreover the chief of our Mazwaya family, Magomanyama, says that no claim is accept d for a leper, for one drowned in the river, for anyone who dies from small pox or from the assagay. "

Of course the Ngwetsa did not accept such an answer, but this is a typical Bantu affair (nandju), showing the many blessings of the lobola custom. The matter will have to be decided by the chief, or rather

by the Portuguese Administrator, who must take a good deal of trouble, if he wishes to understand it rightly and to deliver an equitable judgment !

APPENDIX IV (See p. 252)

The story of Paulus K., illustrating the matlulana superstition and the horror of the Thongas for polyandry.

One of my pupils, who was already a married man of, say, thirty-two years of age, once came to me, very much distressed, to confess a fault which seemed to weigh very heavily on his conscience. On a day of feasting he had drunk too freely and had commited adultery with the wife of his elder brother Guga. He fought with himself for years, not daring to avow an action which seemed to him not only an ordinary adultery but an incestuous act. He finally wrote to his brother : " Though I know that we will not be able to love each other any more as before, though it pains me so much to separate from you, I will confess ! Please forgive me, as I intended to commit suicide on account of my fault" !

The special gravity of the fault consisted in two circumstances : 1) She was his brother's wife and he was now unable to visit his brother when sick, to take part in his burial, or to maintain friendly relations with him. 2) Guga was his elder brother. This made the case still worse. (P. 234).

The letter of Paulus to his fellow evangelists is touching: " I have no right to stay in your assembly, because I have been overcome by the Enemy and committed adultery with my elder brother's wife. I have been long prevented (from confessing) by the Enemy's power. Now I have wept before Jesus that He may help me to pierce the abcess... Satan came and said to me: " Will you not be ashamed to confess such a thing before men ?" I nearly retreated. But at sunrise I made haste to write to you, and now I feel peace and joy. It seems to me that I am going to receive the Spirit of God ".

APPENDIX V (See p. 263)

Te story of Spoon Libombo showing that, when the lobolo has not been paid or has been returned, the children belong to the mother's and not to the father's family.

Spoon was the son of Shibaninge, a woman of the Libombo family, and of Khobete of the Mazwaya family, who had lobola Shibaninge. This man died during a war with the Portuguese having been killed on Mbengelen island. The widow was " fambeliwa " (chosen) by Nsiki, Khobete's brother, who was to inherit her. But Nsiki did not properly care for the widow. He did not prepare a *ntehe* for the baby nor provide the mother with ochre. Seeing this, Shibaninge went back to her relatives. When the time of the weaning of the little one arrived, a man named Mbobobo had irregular relations with the woman in order to " lumula " the child (See page 58). Mbobobo went so far as to take her to his home, upon which Nsiki claimed the lobolo paid by the Mazwaya and the Libombo gave it back to them. Since then Spoon lived in his mother's family and was called : " wa ka Libombo ", " man of Libombo ". But he had no real home (a nga na kwakwe). Being on the spot he always was chosen to help in the sacrifices : drinking the beer which remained in the pot after the libations to the gods in the gandelo, near the gate, stealing the offerings when the victims were killed in the sacred bush, etc. He was the " great ntukulu ", because his mother belonged to the elder branch or first house of the family. So he took precedence of the other uterine nephews when they had to take part in the sacrifices.

APPENDIX VI (See p. 270)

The story of Mboza and Muhambi and of the women inherited by them, illustrating the consequences of lobola and of its suppression.

Compare the genealogy of the Masuluke family (page 219).

Mboza had four brothers, three elder and a younger one ; Sam, the elder one, had a son, Hlangabeza, who married by lobola a first wife and by abduction a second one Bukutje 11. Fos, the second brother, mar-

ried Bukutje I and had four children: three girls, Tshakaza, Estelle, Nwanin, and one boy, Muhambi. Sam and Fos both died, so Bukutje I was inherited by Mboza and her four children went to stay in his village. In the meantime Mboza became a Christian, so did also Muhambi and the three girls. Wishing to lead a Christian life, he separated from Bukutje I, who, being still a heathen, committed herself with " an empty tin of oil " (p. 210), viz., a man of Inhambane who became her servant-husband. In 1904 a Christian young man, Moses, wooed the elder of the three girls and brought £ 20 to lobola her. This money was naturally due to Muhambi in order to allow him to lobola a wife for himself, and indeed Muhambi was betrothed to Ntshelebeti, daughter of Phulan Ngwetsa. This man was still a heathen and consequently wished his daughter to be paid for.

Having been told that it is not right for a Christian to accept lobolo money, Mboza and Muhambi, actuated by a most praiseworthy scruple, decided to return the money to Moses, and Muhambi started for Johannesburg in order to earn the lobolo due to Phulan. But this was not the end of this famous " bukosi " ! The younger brother, Komatan, a consistent heathen, came to Mboza, very angry with him for his foolishness. " This is family property ", said he, " and I do not consent to it being lost ". So he claimed the £ 20 which were given to him, and out of which Mboza did not get a penny. Komatan himself did not mean to use it for his own benefit, as we shall see presently.

The following year, whilst Muhambi was still working in Johannesburg, Hlangabeza died. Muhambi was his heir, being his *makwabu*, first cousin on the paternal side. He was informed of his good luck, but answered that it was taboo for him (yila), as a Christian, to accept this inheritance. So Komatan took the first of Hlangabeza's wives, not as a wife, however, but because she had children and he wanted them to remain in the Masuluke's family. The woman herself also took " an empty tin of oil ", under the form of another Inhambane man. The second of Hlangabeza's wives, having been married by him by abduction, was not really the property of the Masuluke. But she had one child ; so Komatan took the lobolo money of Moses and remitted it to Denisa, that woman's father, and, in this way, he secured the property of both mother and child to the Masuluke. The woman, however, went to live with a Chopi in an irregular manner and had a second child by him. On January 29th. 1909, this woman of the Denisa family came to Muhambi. Her child had to be weaned, which is done by means of a rite in which the husband must take part. She had no proper hus-

band, so she vented all her anger before Mboza and Muhambi saying: " I have no husband, nobody to give me clothing, to pay my hut-tax, to repair my house. Have you indeed forsaken me "? —" Yes " answered Muhambi, " you cannot be my wife. I have married Ntshelebeti and, for us Christians, it is not allowable to take many wives". — "Then do not be surprised if I go and take another husband, and do not go and accuse me *shikanekiswen*, before the Portuguese Administrator, saying I have spoilt your property ". — " We shall not *follow* you ", said Muhambi, " you are free ". — " But " added Mboza, " we are not sending you to commit sin ! Go and think the matter over ".

This was the end of the discussion. Mboza's answer is no answer at all. It only shows the great complexity and difficulty of the position. The whole story fitly illustrates how utterly bad the custom of lobola is, and what immense difficulties its suppression entails. Let me, however, remark that these difficulties would not have arisen had there not been a heathen relative (Komatan) to uphold the claim which the Christians had foregone. During the stage of transition many hard cases such as this must unfortunately happen !

APPENDIX VII

Short Account of two South African wars.

As regards war customs, I not only possess the information obtained from my ordinary sources, Mankhelu, Tobane, Mboza, Viguet, etc., but a certain amount of personal experiences. I had indeed the good, or the bad luck, to witness two South African wars: the Ronga-Portuguese war of 1894-1896 and the Sikororo war in 1901. As many allusions are made to these wars in these pages, my readers may be interested to have a short account of them.

1) *The Ronga-Portuguese war*, of 1894-1896, was caused by the sub-chief Mubvesha when he tried to make himself independent of his young suzerain, Mahazule, who had just succeeded his father Maphunga as legitimate heir of Nondwane (See page 383). Mubvesha succeeded in interesting the Portuguese Administrator in his cause, but the whole clan remained loyal to Mahazule, and, a dispute having arisen, on the 27th August 1894, at Hangwana (the seat of the Administrator), the Mazwaya army assembled and prepared to defend its chief. The

Government then successively asked Nwamantibyane, chief of Mpfumu, and Ngwanazi, chief of Maputju, to help against the rebels. Nwamantibyane, after long hesitation, refused the call (See Appendix VIII). The Maputju warriors came as far as the Tembe shore, but, when asked to cross the bay, they decamped. For some weeks the Native yimpis were the masters of the whole country, up to the boundary of the town of Lourenço Marques. But Portuguese troops soon arrived from Lisbon and retook Hangwana, (10 miles from town), in December. The Royal Commissioner, M. A. Ennes, with his aide de camp, Major (then Captain) F. d'Andrade, having taken command of the campaign, a forward move was made. The Portuguese camped near Morakwen, on the Nkomati River, where a serious battle took place at daybreak on the 2nd February 1895. The yimpis of Mahazule and Nwamantibyane attacked the Portuguese troops while it was still dark and nearly invaded their camp. But the White soldiers did not lose their heads; they rapidly formed square and repulsed the enemy with great loss. At the same time native allies of Matjolo, and Mabota, were driving the rebels from their retreats, so that they fled to the East of the Nkomati River into Gungunyana's territory: these Captain F. d'Andrade followed into the Khosen country and defeated them on the 8th September 1895, at the battle of Magule (See page 447).

The Ngoni king, Gungunyana, had more or less encouraged the rebels to rise. When asked to give them up to the Portuguese he refused to do so. So the war had to be carried up to his stronghold of Mandlakazi. During many weeks the whole of Gungunyana's army, which was estimated at 25 000 to 30 000 men, camped near its king, ready to fight. But, for some unknown reason, the Portuguese, army was delayed and the Thonga battalions, having nothing to eat, disbanded. However, a strong bodyguard, the flower of the great king's troops, consisting principally of Bangoni, remained at the headquarters. When at last the Portuguese arrived in the neighbourhood of Mandlakazi, a sharp fight took place. The Ngoni warriors gallantly attacked the Portuguese square but were driven back with great loss, (305 killed, according to the official report). The royal kraal, Mandlakazi, was taken and destroyed and Gungunyana fled to Tshayimiti, the sacred wood where his ancestors were buried. Some weeks later, Captain Musinho d'Albuquerque, after a forced march, took him prisoner without any fighting, and brought him to Lourenço Marques, whence he was deported to Western Africa.

The Ba-Ngoni considered they had been taken by surprise and not

properly defeated ; so, in 1897, a serious revolt broke out, headed by Magigwane, the Commander in Chief of Gungunyana's yimpi. But it was soon successfully put down by the Portuguese forces, who divided up the country into a certain number of military circumscriptions, and the districts of Lourenço Marques and Inhambane have been perfectly quiet ever since.

2. *The Sikororo war* took place, in 1901, in the Shiluvane country, during the Anglo-Boer war, when the North of the Transvaal, was as it were, without White rulers. The successor of the famous Sekukuni, reigning in the Leydensburg district, Sekhukhukhu, tried to avail himself of the unsettled state of the country to realise an old political dream, viz., to become the paramount chief of the whole country. He interfered with the Maharimane clan, which inhabited the Drakenberg ranges, where the Oliphant crosses it before reaching the plain. This clan was divided into two : the legitimate heir was under the tutelage of a woman named Nwanamohube, but his brother, Maphephe, wanted to get rid of her, pretending she was exercising her authority against the interests of the country. Sekhukhukhu assured the queen-regent that he would help her if she joined him. He entreated the Pedi chiefs dwelling on the Northern side of the range, viz., Sikororo and Maaghe, to espouse his cause. Sikororo was a very strange old man who had retired into the mountain, far away from his villages, and a regent, named Rios, was carrying on the government in his stead. Rios agreed with Sekhukhukhu's proposals ; so did some of the subjects of Maaghe, the Masume people. But Maaghe himself refused to do so and he was supported by Muhlaba, the Nkuna chief, who was an old ally of his.

A first fight took place in the Maharimane valley, where Maphephe was defeated by the united yimpis of Sekhukhukhu and Nwanamohube. He fled. In the meantime another foe, called by the Natives " Fighter-by-night ", had opposed Sekhukhukhu in the Leydenburg district, invaded his territory, and defeated his troops. It seemed that this would put an end to the ambitious plans of the great Pedi chief... But such was not the case. Hearing of his enemy's defeat, Maphephe again took courage. Chased from his country, he sought a refuge with Maaghe, who was imprudent enough to welcome him and all his people in the Bokhaha valley. We witnessed the curious spectacle of a whole clan moving into our district of Shiluvane. The young chief was breathing vengeance. He soon began to make mischief, and organised a raid into Masume's territory. This put a match to the

train. Rios avenged his friends by burning some villages of Muhlaba, and killing the pigs. A regular battle took place, on the 15th October 1901, between the armies of Maaghe and Muhlaba and those of Sikororo and Masume. The first had to retreat, but they suffered no loss, whilst they pretended to have killed 20 of the enemy. The situation was bad for them, as other chiefs threatened to join Sikororo and to deal summarily with them and their missionaries ! I then went to ask for help at Leydsdorp, where the remainder of the Boer Commandoes were just passing, coming from Komati Poort on the way to Pietersburg. I had the good luck to meet there with a party of Hollanders, who at once volunteered to come and save women and children in danger ! They stayed for two days at the Shiluvane station, where their presence caused great sensation... But they had to look after their own affairs, and we were soon obliged to revert to the same dangerous situation ! On the 6th November 1901, the Sikororo yimpi, strengthened by troops of Sekhukhukhu, Mabulanen, Masume etc., a real confederation of yimpis, numbering 700 warriors (as it was estimated), invaded the peaceful Shiluvane valley at dawn, burning the huts, firing their rifles, and shouting wildly : "Moya ! Moya !" (Wind ! Wind ! viz., projectiles of the enemy are but wind !) They went so far as to cross the Moudi rivulet, less than one mile from the Shiluvane Mission Station. The two allied chiefs were not on their guard and had very few men with them. However, they rushed to meet the invaders with such courage that these were suprised. Seing the Christian Natives clad like Europeans, they believed the Hollanders were still there, and they fled ignominously, leaving some 40 of their warriors dead on the field of battle. These are the men whose flesh provided all the Zoutpansberg magicians with their powerful charms ! Rios was killed, and it is said that his corpse was redeemed for the price of ten guineas by the old Sikororo. Others pretend his skull was put by Maaghe in the great drum of his capital. This defeat definitely broke the power of Sikororo, who made his submission, and was the last clash of arms worth mentioning in the war.

APPENDIX VIII

The position of Nwamantibyane when the 1894 war broke out.

When the Portuguese asked Nwamantibyane to help them against Mahazule, (August-September 1894), this young chief, of twenty years of age at the most, assembled his army. An irrestible spirit of war was in the air. Held back by his counsellors, who were unwilling to fight against their rebellious compatriots, Nwamantibyane hesitated to respond to the appeal of the Whites. He was seated, perplexed, in his camp, his demeanour morose and preoccupied, surrounded on the one hand by his "great ones", on the other by his young men who addressed him thus: "Give us, give us men to slaughter! Thou art nothing but a coward! Send us!" Those were tragic times!

He allowed a small contingent to go into the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, in order to reconnoitre (Nov. 6. 1894). This yimpi made several prisoners and stole the oxen of the Swiss Mission, which were grazing in the vicinity of the town. One of our young men, named Tandane, was taken prisoner by a man of Nwamba. A passer-by, belonging to the Mabota clan, was also caught. All these captives were taken to the chief Nwamantibyane, to whom the spoil belonged, his men having been the spoilers. The man who had captured the passer-by from Mabota begged the chief's permission to kill him, which was accorded; this warrior, radiant with joy, immediately retired with his victim, slew him in cold blood and returned to dance before the chief. The Nwamba man requested a like privilege. But Nwamantibyane had other ends in view; he wanted to make use of our young man, to send a message to the Portuguese Governor, and so he refused the permission asked. The man, a prey to an insatiable longing to shed blood, insisted. He was offered as compensation one, and even two, of the stolen oxen, but could not thus be satisfied. "I want my man", said he, "to kill him so that I can dance!" Nwamantibyane had to employ force to silence him. Two oxen, twelve pounds sterling, counted as nothing to this black warrior compared with the fiendish delight he would derive from the *gila!*

As regards the conclusion of the story of Tandane, he came back with a letter from the chief asking why the Whites wanted to kill him, and begging for an interview. When the letter, written in Zulu by some of his boys, had been despatched, the young chief said: "Now I can breathe! When I eat something, it can pass through my throat!'

The Portuguese Governor consented to the interview, but the letter sent back to Nwamantibyane, in answer to his, was intercepted and so the war continued. See in the preceding Appendix how it spread to Gungunyana's country, and ended in the capture of this despot and the destruction of the Ngoni kingdom.

LATIN NOTES

FOR MEDICAL MEN AND ETHNOGRAPHERS

Annotatio prima (P. 39). — "Shifado" quo quisque Thonga extremum penem vestit, spheroides excavataque res est; quod tegimentum ex iis, quæ ad pudorem et munditiem pertinent, postulatur. Si quis schifado suum amisit, ei dedecori est.

Olim apud Thonga, qui a populo Zulu illum morem acceperunt, viri, quod linguâ ipsorum "*mbayi*" id est fistulam quandam ex foliis textis palmæ, quæ "milala" dicitur, ferre solebant.

Ultima "mbayi" anno 1895 vel 1896 post Christum natum visa sunt. Quod shifado ex parvæ cucurbitæ cortice aut duro et excavato accurateque polito ligno factum, summo veretro affixum, minime incommode ferre videntur.

Annotatio secunda (P. 55). S. n. i, sc. semine non immisso. Ad hoc, marito sperma foras spargendum est (a nga mu weleri): hic est coitus rite factus et quasi lustralis. Inde, uxor in manus utriusque sordes (thyaka ra bona) sumit, quibus umbilicum illinit.

Annotatio tertia (P. 160). Faciebat dum « Khunye khunye »; quibus verbis significatur coitus (khunyeta).

Annotatio quarta (P. 161). Hic, mulier paulo dilutiore colore magnaque statura addit: « Hi kundjana » id est: coeamus!

Annotatio quinta (P. 154). Seu quis per ætatem iam provectam imbecillior factus erit, sive qualibet de causa tam impotens ut sperma emittere non possit (a nga kumi mati), ceteri viri quid fiat sciscitabuntur. Quod si utique parum procedit, tota inhibetur cærimonia. Qui vero se invicem eodem ritu miscere debebant, iis ritum conficere non fas est. Ille jejunio, per quinque dies, prout res postulat, artissime utetur, cui medicinæ ad rem accommodatæ exquirentur.

Annotatio sexta (P. 154). Nocens maritus uxorque sui purgandi causâ

alium ritum peragent. Uxor mariti suaque pudenda veste intima et inquinatissima tergebit, quam postea comburet.

Ambo, ad ignem accedentes, caput manusque calefacient. Inde cinerem collectum mulier adipe miscet, quo mariti artus illinit, digitis bracchiis cruribusque tractis, quod "lula" dicitur. Postea, noctibus duabus sequentibus, coibunt. Si maritus, non cum uxore sua, sed cum puella quadamex alio vico, stupri consuetudinem junxerit, huic fossorium donabitur, ut ritum "lula" perfectum veniat.

Quo modo illos ritus interpretemur, paucis verbis ostendemus. Si quis morte inquinatus est, spermatis prima ejaculatio etiam inquinata est; itaque foras semen spargendum est (Cf. *Revue des Études sociologiques*, p. 149). Pater maximo periculo obnoxius videtur, nisi res rite confecta est; sed omnia ea quam occultissima videntur imprimis ei qui haec praecepta cum legibus quae sunt de viduis conferre velit.

Annotatio septima (P. 155). Si mulieris parentes procul habitant, maritus eius comes itineris erit, quacum superiore nocte coibit, ad aquæ lustrali vim novam dandam.

Annotatio octava (P. 160). Carminum, morum temporis marginalis natura eo obscenior est quo nobilior defunctus fuit. Viguetus narrat: "Duce vel uno ex principibus mortuo, luctuque consueto præterito, luctum privatum, ad quem boves immolentur, celebrari. Carnem ad baculos humi fixos alligari; homines inde mulierem vocare, eamque posteriorem vestem exuere juberi, neque ullam vestem nisi anteriorem habere quam, si velit, exuere ei liceat. Eam, postea, divaricaturam esse ad unam ex carnis particulis dentibus apprehendendam ita prominentem ut omnes viri eius pudenda videant, quod plerumque "taboo" (id est nefas) sit".

Annotatio nona (P. 183). Externorum genitalium minora labra verbo milebe (singul. nebe) designantur, quæ puellæ adeo trahere solent ut ea usque ad quinque, decem, etiam quindecim centimetra extendant. Quæ labra nonnunquam parvis baculis metiuntur, eorum longitudine, apud comites suas, immo apud sponsos, gloriantes. Istis pravis moribus enim nihil aliud puellæ sequuntur nisi futuri mariti gratiam, cui apud Ba-Pedi, si sponsam suam labra non satis extendisse arbitratur, eam domum dimittere et boves suos reposcere licet.

Annotatio decima (P. 187). Hæc sunt ipsissima verba, quibus Makhelu mulieris menstruansis taboo (id est nefas) describit. Mulier menstruans est res, quæ imprimis "yila" est. Per sex dies "yila", id est, nefas est. Septimo die *transit flumen* ad se lavandam. Octavo ei nondum licet cum marito suo coire; forte enim sanguis pudendis ad

hæret, eà insciente. Magis "refrigescit". (Verbo *phula* menstruans mulier comparatur cum aula a foco remota).

Si, ante id tempus, maritus cum uxore cœat, ægrotus fiat, veretrum retro ita recedat ut vir urinam reddere non possit et, brevi tempore, moriatur. Talem vitæ exitum multi habuerunt. Radicibus arboris cui nomen est *mayilana* vel mulieris menstruantis vestis particulà, a medico ad levem pulverem redactà, quæ ægro bibenda est, morbus sanari potest. Aegrotus multum sanguinis reddet, et veretro exeunte, salvus est.

Annotatio undecima (P. 188). Adulescens Manyisa ortus aliquando ad me venit questum quod amita se fascinavisset et "quod sibi esset" eripuisset (scilicet facultatem cum muliere sua cœundi). Quæ mulier prægnans erat; itaque juvenis affirmavit maleficia ad nocendum conceptui pertinère et pro certo habebat fore ut fœtus in anguem, vel in cuniculum, immo in antilopam mutaretur.

Annotatio duodecima. (P. 274). Doctori G. Liengmei, nostro medico, cum sæpe curaret vires qui medicinam petebant qua infantes procrearent, fassi sunt se singulis noctibus cum tribus vel quatuor uxoribus coire. (A monogamis quibusdam audivimus uxorem adeo fatigari ut noctu exiret laboratum ut a marito evaderet.) Cum medicus eos hortaretur ut quinque dies concubitu omnino abstinerent, nunquam id concedere potuerunt. Volebant enim facultatem generandi recuperare libidine non omissa. Dicuntur etiam cum vires cupiditatibus nondum pares esse videantur, remedia quædam adhibere sive ut venerem excitent sive ut uxores praegnantes fiant. Duplex fit medicatio. Primum secti testiculi hirci — (quod animal fatigari negatur, mbuti a yi karali) — cum plurimis herbis mixti coquuntur et a viro eduntur. Deinde alias herbas collectas in cerevisiam injicit. Tantum aiunt esse effectum ut viro qui non amplius duas uxores habeat, non sit ea re utendum, ne, illis non sufficientibus, cum aliorum uxoribus stuprum committat, quod ei sit offensioni.

Viri casti, ut in loco Mpfumo videre licet, in sua casa dormiunt et interdum uxorem quam cupiunt ad se vocant. Plerique tamen, lege sibi imposita, ne discordia inter uxores erumpat, mensem unum in casa singularum uxorum vicissim agunt.

Annotatio tertia decima (P. 452). Veretro fabricatur pulvis, cuius effectus mirabilis est. Qui, bellatorum carpis iniectus, iis tantam sollertiam affert ut nullum frustra telum mittant. Quo pulvere tela quoque illinuntur quæ assagaies appellantur.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Page

To his Excellency, the Right Honourable James Bryce. Ethnography and Entomology. Urgency of the work. My informants. Scientific and practical aim. Plan of the book. To help one's fellow-men is nobler than to impart knowledge 1

PRELIMINARY CHAPTER

THE THONGA TRIBE.

I. Geographical delimitation of the tribe. 13
II. Tribe, Groups and Clans 14
III. The generic name of the tribe. 14
IV. The six groups ofthe Thonga clans 16
V. The numerical strength of the Thonga tribe . . . 19
VI. The History of the Thonga tribe 20
A. Prehistoric period 21
B. Historic period 26
VII. Ethnic characteristics of the Thonga tribe . . . 28

FIRST PART

THE LIFE OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

FIRST CHAPTER. The Evolution of a Man from Birth to Death . 35
A. Infancy 35
I. The day of the birth. 35
II. The first week, or confinement period 40
III. The nursing period 44
1) The ntehe 44

Page

2) The Diet of the nursing period. 45
3) Dentition. 49
4) The presentation to the moon 51
5) The tying of the cotton string 54
6) The weaning 56
Conclusion on the rites of Infancy 60
B. Childhood. 61
1) Herding the goats 61
2) Stealing 63
3) Catching game 64
4) Learning the science of the bush 65
5) Games of the boys 65
C. The age of Puberty 71
I. Circumcision Rites 71
1) Spread and origin of the Circumcision custom amongst the Thonga. 71
2) General characteristics of the circumcision rite . 73
3) The three series of rites of the circumcision . . 74
a) Separation rites 74
b) Marginal rites 76
I. The lodge or sungi 77
II. The sexual and language taboos of the sungi 79
III. The trials 80
IV. The teaching of the formulae 85
c) Aggregation rites 89
I. The Mulagaru pole. 89
II. The Mayiwayiwana dance 90
III. The last day. 91
IV. The Chameleon procession 92
Some remarks on the Circumcision school 92
II. Other Puberty Rites. 94
1) The custom of the erotic dream 94
2) Piercing of ears 95
III. The "Gangisa" 96
D. Marriage 100
I. The love charms 100
II. Marriage ceremonies of the Mpfumo clan . . . 102
1) The betrothal (buta) 102
2) The betrothal visits. 103
3) Taboos of the betrothal period 107

Page

4) The lobola feast 108
a) Preparations. 108
b) The assault of the village 109
c) Counting the lobolo 109
d) The wedding procession 110
e) The religious act. 111
f) The symbolical belt 112
5) The tlhoma feast. 112
III. Marriage customs of other Ronga clans 114
IV. Marriage customs of the Northern clans 116
V. Marriage by abduction 120
Some remarks about Marriage customs of the Thonga . 121
E. Mature Age 125
I. The Bantu Ideal. 125
II. The fixation of the wax crown. 129
F. Old Age 131
G. Death 132
I. The last days 132
II. The grave 136
III. The burial 137
IV. The Great Mourning 144
1) The Great Mourning amongst the Ba-Ronga . . 149
2) The Great Mourning in the Northern clans . . 150
V. The sexual rites of purification. 152
VI. Familial Mourning rites. 156
1) Amongst the Ba-Ronga. 156
2) In the Northern clans 163
VII. Various cases of death 165
Conclusion regarding Death and funerals 167
SECOND CHAPTER. The Evolution of a Woman from Birth to Death 173
A. Before Marriage 173
I. Girl's games 173
II. Nubility Customs 177
1) The khomba rite. 177
2) Tattooing. 179
3) Pointing the teeth 183
4) The milebe custom 183
B. Marriage and Conjugal life 183
1) Conditions of Marriage 183

Page

2) Special feminine taboos 184
3) The first year of married life 186
4) Husband and wife 186
5) Sterility 187
6) Pregnancy and Miscarriage 188
7) Parturition 190
8) Loss of children 191
9) Adultery 192
10) Divorce 195
11) Widowhood 197
C. Old Age and Death 210

SECOND PART

THE LIFE OF THE FAMILY AND OF THE VILLAGE.

FIRST CHAPTER. The Life of the Family 216
A. Comparison of English and Thonga terms of kinship. . 217
B. Explanation of Thonga terms of relationship 221
I. Blood relationship 221
1) Relatives on the father's side 221
2) Relatives on the mother's side 224
3) Relationship on the wife's side. 229
C. Marriage rules. 240
I. Cases of absolute prohibition 241
II. Marriages conditionally permitted 243
III. Marriages permitted. 246
IV. Marriages recommended 247
D. Remnants of previous systems of relationship 250
I. Original promiscuity 251
II. Group marriage 251
III. Matriarchy 253
1) Duties and rights of the maternal uncle . . . 253
2) Rights of the uterine nephew 255
E. The lobola custom 258
I. History of the custom. How it is practised . . . 258
II. The original meaning and the consequences of lobola 262
III. Attitude to adopt towards the lobola custom . . . 266
F. Polygamy 271
I. Origin and spread of Polygamy amongst the Thongas 271

Page

II. Consequences of Polygamy 273
III. Attitude to adopt towards Polygamy 276
Second chapter. The Life of the Village 280
A. The Thonga village 280
B. Moving a village and founding a new one 288
I. In the Northern clans 290
II. In the Ronga clans 293
III. Some remarks about the rites of moving 296
C. The headman and the organisation of the Thonga village. 298
D. The daily life in the village 303
I. Women's occupations 304
II. Men's occupations 307
III. Games of adults 309
E. Rules of politeness and hospitality 320
F. The fate of the Thonga village 324

THIRD PART

The national life

First chapter. The Clan 329
A. The actual organisation of the Clan. 329
B. The laudatory name of the clans and Totemism . . . 333
Second chapter. The Evolution of the Chief 341
A. Birth and Youth 341
B. Coronation 344
C. The Official Marriage 348
D. The Reign 355
I. The sacred character of the Chief 355
II. The Regalia 359
III. The right of luma and the first fruits rites . . . 366
IV. Taxation 377
V. Dangers and difficultes of the Chieftainship . . . 380
1) The character of the Chief 381
2) The system of Government. 382
3) The law of succession 383
E. Death 387
Third chapter. The Court and Tribunal 391
A. The Village of the Chief. 391
B. Court personages 394

Page

I. The Counsellors 394
II. The Favourites 396
III. The Herald 397
IV. The Public Vituperator 401
C. Sundry Court Customs 403
I. The Big Drum 403
II. The Bunanga or band of horn players 404
III. The Shipalapala 405
IV. Visitors 405
V. The Kondza Custom 406
VI. Diplomatic relations 407
D. The Tribunal of the Chief 408
I. Legislative affairs 408
II. Judicial cases 410
1) Sense of justice 410
2) Civil cases 412
3) Criminal cases 414
FOURTH CHAPTER. The Army 423
A. Warlike proclivities of the Thongas 423
B. War costume and weapons 424
C. Mobilisation of the army 430
D. The Mukhumbi, circle of warriors 431
E. War-songs 434
F. War-dance 437
G. Administering the war-medicine 439
H. On the war-path. The battle. Strategy. Panics. Return home 443
I. The fate of the slain and the treatment of the slayers . . 450
J. Some remarks about war rites 456
Conclusions on Part III : The new era and the South African tribe 458
I. The result of the meeting of Civilisation and of the tribal Bantu 459
II. How can we preserve the sense of political responsibility amongst South African Natives ? 462
a) Native franchise 462
b) Strengthening the tribal system 464
c) Native representation 466
Appendix I. Characteristics of the six dialects of the Thonga language 468

Page

» II. About Thonga names, nicknames and surnames 474
» III. The story of Gidhlana Ngwetsa (lobola, divorce, leper customs) 476
» IV. The story of Paulus K. (matlulana) 479
» V. The story of Elias Libombo (lobola rules) . . 480
» VI. The story of Mboza and Muhambi (consequences of lobola) 480
» VII. Short account of two South African wars . . 482
» VIII. The position of Nwamantibyane when the 1894 war broke out 486
Latin Notes 488

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Pages
Spoon as bone thrower in 1894	4
Tobane	4
Mankhelu, standing in his village by the magic forked pole	5
Spoon-Elias as Church elder in 1907	7
Coloured Map showing the six groups of Thonga clans	16
A « Zuluised » Thonga warrior	32
A South African woman with her child in the "ntehe"	44
Thonga calabashes	48
Boys herding goats on the Shiluvane plain	62
A Thonga boy	65
Boys trying to play billiards	70
Schematic drawing of the circumcision lodge	78
Danse of the shepherds and men of the circumcision school	81
Cutting open a crocodile near the Nkomati river	87
A Mayiwayiwane mask	90
Drawing water from the Maputju river	95
Ndjakandjaka with his men	127
A Ronga in his grave	139
The grave of Sokis	141
The ceremony of crushing down the hut	159
Girls with babies at Makulane	171
Various forms of buhlolo (string game)	176
Tattooed women of the Nkuna clan	181
Tattooed women of the Maputju clan	182
Thonga women of the Transvaal	193
Cattle going to water at the Maputju river	260
Chief Mubvesha with some of his wives	275
Schematic representation of the Thonga village	282
The interior of a Ronga village	285
Spelonken women preparing the evening meal	304

Pages

Shiluvane girls returning from the well 306
Beer-drinking party in Maputju country 310
Hemp-smoker 312
Illustration of the saliva fight of hemp-smokers. 313
Men playing tshuba near Rikatla 314
The tshuba game and its laws 316
Christian village of Shiluvane 325
The "nkanye" of Rikatla 370
Bukanyé drinking near Antioka. 373
Ngoni Queens 389
Main gate of the Tembe capital. 392
The hubo, square of the Tembe capital 392
Back gate with hen house 393
Back gate. 394
Sunduza, Chief of the Maluleke clan, with his Counsellors . . 395
Muhlaba, Chief of the Nkuna clan 399
Molwele, the Pedi dwarf 402
An habitué of the Nkuna Court 408
Thonga weapons 427
Plan of the battle of Magule (Sept. 8. 1895). 447
Muhlaba's house in the Thabina Location. 465
Sham fight at Ndlebende's (Maputju) 500

CONCLUDING REMARKS

On the eve of forwarding this first volume to my Subscribers and of offering it to the public, I wish to add the following remarks:

1) I express all my gratitude to my collaborators, principally to Mr. G. D. Fearon, who kindly revised my manuscript to ake it more adequate to the requirements of the English language; also to Mr. J. Wavre, of Neuchâtel who executed the schematic drawings, and to Mr. Cl. Heaton, who designed the Thonga warrior on the cover, after a photograph taken by Dr Liengme at Gungunyana's capital. I do not forget Professor H. Borle and J. Lecoultre, who kindly translated the Latin notes.

2) I again ask the indulgence of the English public for any shortcomings in my style, as I feel sure that such must be very apparent. My readers will kindly forgive me as long as the meaning is clear. Should any important point be obscured by inadequacy of expression, I should esteem it a favour if such should be pointed out to me for revision.

3) It is hoped that the second volume, which will deal with the Psychic Life of the Tribe and present a special interest to folklorists and students of Comparative Religion, will be completed by the end of 1912. I intend giving, at the end of it, a general alphabetical index of all the subjects treated in both volumes.

Phot. D. Lenoir.

Sham fight at Ndlebende's (Maputju).

89

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